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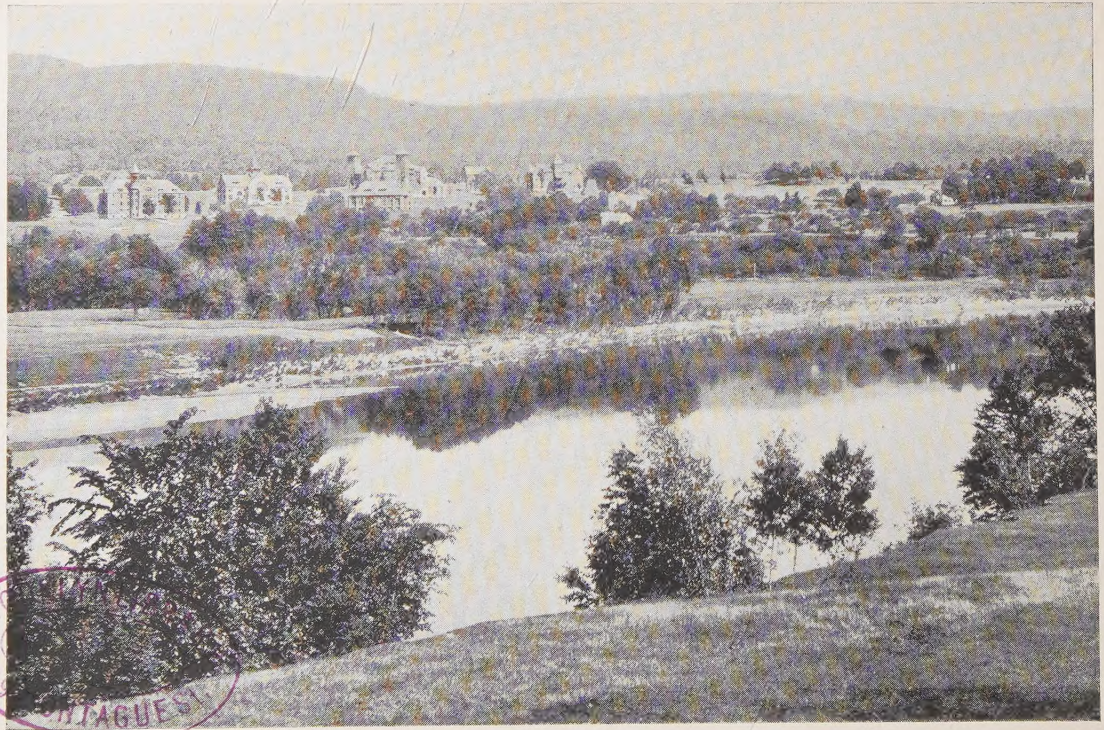

NORTHFIELD (MASS.) INSTITUTE, FROM THE WEST SIDE OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

Things of.... Northfield and.... Other Things

THAT SHOULD BE IN EVERY CHURCH

BY

Rev. DAVID GREGG, D.D.

Pastor of Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. Author of "Facts that Call for Faith," "Makers of the American Republic," "The Testimony of the Land to the Book," "Our Best Moods," etc., etc.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

This volume consists of five discourses preached in the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn. There is much demand in that church to see in print the sermons there preached, that their impression may be renewed and deepened; and not a few volumes have been made of these sermons to meet this demand, as well as to carry the impressive words to a wider circle.

The peculiar quality of the sermons here presented, which justified the gathering of them in a special volume under a common name, is that they were preached after a visit to Mr. Moody's annual summer convention at Northfield, in which the author took part, and that under their different headings they all give expression to the emotions and thoughts of an active pastor. As he turns back from this great spiritual colloquy, and looks his own people in the face, and asks his heart what now

in his new thoughts and revived emotions he would wish to translate from these northern hills to this home church. It is a good thing that a pastor may go away from the more common every Sunday surroundings, and fill his soul freely with the finest spiritual food; good for him to have some other place than his own closet and his own study for the gathering of new strength for his work. But as he does all this, he must needs wish that something of the high, pure, open-air spiritual life of those holy hills may come and remain among all his people. These discourses ably and tenderly voice this feeling and conviction.

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THINGS OF NORTHFIELD WHICH SHOULD BE IN EVERY CHURCH.

"I speak . . . if by any means I may provoke to emulation."—ROM. xi.: 14.

I.

THINGS OF NORTHFIELD WHICH SHOULD BE IN EVERY CHURCH.

Is not the summer a menace to the higher life of man? Is it not a season of spiritual weakness? That depends altogether on where you spend the summer, and how. To some it is; to some it is not.

A summer spent at a fashionable resort, where artificiality reigns, and the brass band perpetually plays, and the midnight sees the dance only well begun, and custom announces that everybody is expected to be the incarnation of the fashion-plate:—that may be a menace to the higher life. But a summer spent at Northfield, with prayer in the morning, and church all day, and lights out at ten o'clock—that is a summer of another kind.

I do not wonder that the question is asked: "Is not the summer a menace to the higher life of man?" The summer as it is now spent is a

season of relaxation. Everything takes a vacation, even conscience. Men and women are away from under the eyes of home police. They have time on hand to do as they please. The spirit of self-abandon is in the air. It is too hot to be serious; and there is too much languor of nerve and muscle and spirit that one should be expected to rein himself up to anything like duty or self-restraint. Expectation is everywhere let down to a low tone. A man demands little of his neighbor and nothing of himself. The fact is this, during the summer it is considered that no one is on duty. It is the time when we city people expect to spend our money and to make none. It is allowable for us to use up the income of the whole year to cover the expense of a single trip amid people we know not, and among whom we can pose for what we are not. Is my sarcasm misplaced? Am I only a miserable pessimist? Am I simply a mean slanderer of the summer?

Sometimes a single event, a single fact, gives us an insight into the true nature of things. I think this is the case here. Take one single fact relative to the summer—the fact which the bookseller tells us. What does the bookseller tell us? He tells us that the one book which commands the largest sale during the

summer is the novel. Well, what of that? The novel is a good thing; it is the very widest door to the mind of mankind. It carries inspiration in it and mental tonic. It kindles and develops love; and man and woman can do nothing better than love. Yes, all this is true of the good and pure and wholesome novel. But the bookseller tells us that the kind of novel which sells best in the summer is the novel which deals in realism, and whose morals are doubtful. Is that true? Then the people are not at their best in summer, and the higher life of man is not being cultured.

Thoughtful and wise-hearted men have seen the menace which the summer as spent in our age carries in it, and it has awakened them to search for a defence. They have seen idle time going to waste; they have seen the sleep of conscience; the frivolous and hurtful dissipation; the fashionable and unintellectual life, and the charm of the questionable novel. They have seen the people return to their homes morally unkeyed and spiritually paralyzed; and, moved to pity by the sight, they have given themselves to the task of finding a preventive. In their diagnosis of the case, they have found that the origin of the trouble is largely this:—unused time. As unoccupied

time is the cause which makes the summer an injury to so many, they have determined to remove the cause by providing men with something good and grand wherewith to fill up their time. And this I take it is the origin of Chautauqua and Northfield and Long Beach and Keswick and the summer school of theology at Oxford. These are all of them intended to protect the summer against waste, and against what is worse than waste, viz.: a wrong and bad use; and they do so by filling the summer with education, and with lofty fellowships, and with pure and undefiled religion.

But it is with Northfield that I mean to deal exclusively in this discourse.

Northfield is one of the oldest towns in the United States. It dates back to the year 1663. It is a typical New England town, with its one wide street and giant elms. It is located in one corner of Massachusetts where you can look over into Vermont and into New Hampshire and see the spurs of the Green Mountains and the spurs of the White Mountains. It is picturesque to the last degree. There are river and forest and mountain and lake and fertile valley. But what of this? There are thousands of places in our land which can boast of all I have mentioned. That is true. These

do not make Northfield. It is Mr. Moody that makes Northfield, and the institution which Mr. Moody has been instrumental in planting there. At Northfield and on Mount Hermon Mr. Moody has planted Christian schools for young women and young men who have limited means but high aims, and who wish above all things a good and a distinctively Christian education. In these schools are hundreds of young men and women to-day, who are bound to make their mark in this country, and to help America to reach a higher level. Scholars from these schools go to the ends of the earth, and they carry with them a manhood and a womanhood which are themselves educational. Out of these schools have gone pupils already who have taken the highest honors in our leading universities. Here on these Massachusetts hills and in these educational plants, Christians of money should invest their consecrated means, and enlarge and endow and perpetuate these magnificent institutions which under God are making the very men and women that the future needs. Christian capitalist, instead of building a costly shaft out in Greenwood to perpetuate your name and lead people to ask as they look on it, "Who was he, anyway?" build a hall, or a chapel, or a library, or a

home to the name of Jesus Christ at Northfield, and make your money live and educate and develop and bless immortal souls to the end of time. If you cannot give in large enough sums for this, give in smaller sums. Select some orphan boy and send him to school there and make a man out of him, and take his coming manhood for Christ. Or select an orphan girl and send her to school and make a woman out of her, and take her coming womanhood for Christ.

But Northfield not only draws the youth of our land to its Christian schools during the school-term; when the school-term is over and when vacation has come, it draws to itself bands of earnest Christian men and women, that they may spend the summer among its hills in quest of a higher, broader, deeper, fuller spiritual life. In this regard it is like Oxford of England, which has a summer conference for study upon the more intellectual lines relative to religion. A friend of mine who was at Oxford this summer writes: "The profoundest subjects have been treated with no dread of results. There have been no truths too sacred for reverent inquiry. Principal Fairbairn has been really great, and he is the master spirit here. The summer school is his. But yet after all it is Oxford itself that is the charm

and the drawing-power. Here are the very colleges in which the men who have made England have been trained, and here are gathered much of the noblest architecture, and the most finished culture, and the richest achievements of the world. And then the place is cool enough for comfortable work in summer." That is it. There is a drawing charm about a spot where educational institutions rise, which are doing a great work; and now that Northfield has its educational institutions, it has a charm which draws and which helps to make the summer Conference a power and a success.

It is Northfield as the seat of the summer Christian Conference that we have before us now. And Northfield as such has been greatly blessed by the Lord. God has blessed it to such an extent, and has made it such a far-reaching power, that I believe the great need of our Christian churches is, that they be made hungry with an intense hunger for *the things of Northfield.* The things which succeed there are the things which will succeed in every Christian church.

Now I imagine you ask me: What did you see in Northfield which ought to be in every Christian church? The question calls for several answers.

1. *I saw there a holy, hearty, life-giving, and transforming and transfigurating fellowship.*

Such a fellowship certainly should characterize every church of Jesus Christ. There were over two thousand people there, men and women of the church universal, and yet all were heartily welcomed, and all were made to feel at home in this great household of faith. That was one of the very first things that impressed me, and I felt there was power in it, and success in it. That is precisely what our churches to-day need:—A fellowship which welcomes, and which will make men and women feel at home. Such a welcome is as divine sunshine. People will come to it, and respond to it, and in it open all that is best in them and give what is best to God and to others. Let no one say, "Why, that is the welcome every church gives to people"; for it is not. If that were the welcome the churches gave the people, the churches would be full. A gentleman whom I expect to see to-morrow told me this incident. He is a D.D., also a LL.D., and a man of exceedingly fine presence. He said: "I went into a Presbyterian church in New York to hear Rev. Dr. B., lately come to the city. Positively there was not one person in the auditorium to every pew. The sexton showed

me into a seat in the middle aisle. Presently a lady came up the aisle and stood in front of the pew in which I was, and from her manner I concluded she was the owner of the pew. I rose, stepped into the aisle and handed her in. She bowed her head and said whatever prayer she had to say, and then bending toward me she whispered, 'Do I know you?' I replied, 'Madam, I do not think I have the honor of an acquaintance.' 'How did you get in my pew?' 'The sexton showed me to this seat.' 'He should have known better than that.' The Doctor of Divinity became at once anxious to know who his kind friend was. The hymn book helped him here. It contained the family name. At the close of the service, using the knowledge he had thus obtained, he addressed his new-made friend: "Have I the honor of speaking to Mrs. X?" "That is my name, sir." "I knew your late husband well: we were associated together in many ways and very intimately." "Indeed." Then he related several things which awakened her interest; and before the conversation closed, all the ice had thawed away, and she found that he was just as good as she was. In bidding him good-day she leaned over and said: "I hope you will not think anything of the conversation which

passed between us at the beginning of the service." That is an exaggerated case, but the same thing is a possibility in a hundred other pews in New York and Brooklyn. For one I wish to say: It ought not to be a possibility in a single pew throughout Christendom. No child of God should ever be made to feel that he is a stranger or that he is unwelcome in his Father's House.

But it is of the power of the fellowship which I saw at Northfield which I wish to speak. I wish to lay emphasis upon its power. The fellowship there had a testing power. It was self-revealing. If you were nothing but an ordinary Christian, you felt at once that that was your true measure, and that that was all that you were. Is it not something to be taught that there is a life richer, and fuller of joy and of power than that enjoyed by the ordinary Christian? The truth is, that the deepest teachings of Christ are almost meaningless to a large number of the members of the church, so ordinary is the average run of Christians.

The men and women who were present at Northfield were in pursuit of high things, and you felt it. Their religion was a reality to them. God's book was a living voice to them, and salvation through the blood of Christ was

a present thing. There was a hunger and a thirst after righteousness in the very air. The whole atmosphere was deeply and intensely spiritual. By your contact with men and women you were made conscious of the absence of the things you had not, but which you ought to have. One felt how feeble his prayers were, and how insignificant his self-sacrifices were, and how little of God he admitted into his life. On the other hand, one felt how great were his possibilities, and how much he might do for God and for self and for others, if he but fulfilled the simple conditions of service laid down in God's word. From all parts of the world there were men and women present whom God was using, and whose stories thrilled one through and through, and found the lowest depths of one's nature, and awoke in one an enthusiasm and a faith and a desire to be used.

There was one man there who will be remembered as long as the Conference is remembered. It was the patriarch, the Rev. Mr. Young. He spent his whole life in laboring among the North American Indians. He stood before that audience, his silver locks a crown of glory, a man veritably transfigured, feeling through all his being the ecstasy of a self-surrender, long honored of God. All he did was

to tell the story of his life, and how he was instrumental in bringing thousands to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The audience listened with breathless attention when he told the sorrow of an aged Indian who lost his Bible and who traveled hundreds of miles to find it, and who, when he found it, brought it back with great joy to his wigwam. Methinks many a heart in that audience felt rebuked at the way it treated God's Book in this land of Bibles. That man's life has been a wonderful life; but then the man kept nothing back from God. When Mr. Young finished, if any half-hearted Christian in that audience had been asked to put the life of this missionary to the Indians and the life of A. T. Stewart side by side, and choose which he would rather take before the throne of God, he would have said, with an enthusiasm at white heat, "There is no room for a comparison, there is only a striking and wilting contrast; give me Mr. Young's life a hundred times over."

Such is the holy fellowship which every church of Jesus Christ needs to-day; but such is not the fellowship which every church of Jesus Christ has. There are churches on every hand in which a man can live half-hearted, cold, lukewarm, building up a questionable

character, doing questionable deeds, speaking questionable words, and yet not be revealed unto himself, not be rebuked, not be shamed out of himself and his burlesque caricature of the religion of Christ. I do not wonder that these churches make no saving impression upon the communities in which they are found. They are not yet saved themselves. Give me a church of converted men and women, in which everything morally wrong stands revealed and rebuked; in which the close-fisted man, and the man of the compromised character, and the man religiously inactive feels himself to be out of place; in which honesty and purity and truthfulness and love and a true life are all and all; give me such a church and you give me a church that will command the community, and save sinners by the hundreds, and into which the saints will flock because there they know they can find their best self, and meet with Christ, and grow, and realize the highest demands of their immortal souls. My fellow-men, you may have eloquent sermons in your church, you may have the finest classical music, you may have the richest adornment of sacred art, but if you have not there a holy fellowship, a communion of men and women of pure hearts and of burning zeal for

souls, with characters above the suspicion of the world, and lives which are clean socially and commercially and politically, you will have a church upon which God has written "*Ichabod*"; that is: "*The glory has departed.* The fellowship of every Christian church ought to be such that the moment a man steps into it he will feel that he is in a pure, live, holy, and sympathetic world, in which he gets spiritual electricity and life from every touch, and on every side.

The second thing which I found in Northfield which should be in every church was this:

2. *A living faith in a present God, and in Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour; and in immediate fruits from the faithful offer of salvation.*

But do not all churches present God as a present God? No. At first thought you may think they do; but upon consideration you will see that they do not. They talk to you of God as a God of the past, and that is about all. He was the God of Abraham, and was with Abraham, and called Abraham, and worked through Abraham, and made Abraham a grand man. He was the God of Noah, and saved the world through Noah, and brought Noah through marvellous and startling experience. He was

the God of David, and swept David's harp-nature; and from every string caused a song of the soul to leap forth and thrill and inspire and create and voice spiritual life in the souls of men. He was with Isaiah and with the Apostles, and made them leaders of thought and pillars in the kingdom of God. That is what we hear in the churches to-day. God was the great God of the past. But that, good as it is and true as it is, is far from enough. We need a teaching that brings God up to date. That is what the teaching of Northfield does. In the teachings from the platform there, it is constantly impressed upon men that God is as much with men now as he ever was, and that he is knocking at the door of our being, seeking to make Abrahams out of us, Noahs out of us, Davids out of us, Isaiahs and Johns and Peters out of us. The result of the declaration of this faith in a present God, who to-day calls men and is with men, is this:—men leave the Northfield Conference every year with the conviction that they are as much called of God to their every-day work as Abraham was to his, or David to his; and with this sense of their divine call they successfully do their work. Churches of God, that is what you want to do: you want to put a divine call into

the life of men, and give them the power to be successful in living.

Another thing that they believe at Northfield is this: that Christ is a complete Saviour, and he is a complete Saviour because he took our room and law-place, and in his own body on the cross bore the penalty of sins. Now, that is not preached to-day as it was in olden days. There are ministers and churches that do not believe in the substitution of Christ in our room and stead. How they can claim to be scriptural I do not know. At one of the meetings of the Conference this year, I heard the great leader of Northfield go through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, setting forth the substitution of Christ and salvation through his substitution; and when he finished his masterly exposition, the people of that audience said to themselves: "When you take the substitution of Christ out of the Bible, you have left nothing worth keeping, so far as salvation goes; you may do with the rest of the Bible what you please."

I tell you, churches of God, if you do not tell men who are under the debt of the law and the condemnation of sin that Christ has paid it all, you tell them absolutely nothing. It is nothing to tell them that they are condemned—they

know that already; their wicked hearts tell that; what men need to be told is how they can be freed from the awful condemnation. They must be told of pardon through the blood of Christ. The news of salvation through Christ is true, and the message is so glad that no church should tolerate any substitute for it. I heard this story related from the Northfield platform, which illustrates the peace and comfort of pardon through Christ.

A criminal was on trial for capital misdemeanor. The evidence proved overwhelmingly against him. The law was explicit. There seemed no avenue of escape. The people grew anxious on his behalf, as the verdict of condemnation inevitably drew nearer. Yet all the while this prisoner at the bar kept inexplicably calm. His eyes never once quailed, although the most damaging facts continually came to light. At last the jury returned and the fatal decision was rendered; but all that the culprit did was to draw a long sigh of unmistakable relief. The bystanders marvelled at his self-control, and grew curious over the secret of his serenity, and especially when they imagined they detected in his unembarrassed demeanor a strange sort of triumph. By and by, when the sentence of death was pro-

nounced, he arose in his place and laid before his judges a full pardon for the crime of which he had been just now convicted—a pardon which all along he had held hidden in his bosom. They examined the roll with eager scrutiny, and found that it really was his discharge. It left no further question. It had indeed been signed by the hand of their generous sovereign, and sealed with the grand signet of the realm. There remained no more to be done. And amid the shouts of the people the man went immediately forth free. The law's demands were cancelled.

That is the sinner saved by Christ. He is so saved by Christ that there is forever no condemnation against him. He is saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Do you say "I am afraid of this imputed righteousness business—I believe only in imparted righteousness"? Never mind, have no fears on this score; because, in God's plan, imparted righteousness always comes to the man to whom God credits imputed righteousness.

The justified man is always made holy.

It is my conviction that the church that cannot preach the imputed righteousness has nothing saving to preach.

Now, if this doctrine be true, and this offer

of complete salvation through Christ be genuine, the next thing which Northfield believes in is perfectly logical, viz.: immediate results —conversions on the spot. If our churches gave the message, "Christ has paid it all," and fully believed in the message as the truth of God, they, too, would look for sudden conversions, and would see them. Usually churches get just what they expect. Some people do not believe in sudden conversion, and they think they are orthodox. To my mind they are heterodox. For what saith the Scripture? Are not the most of the conversions recorded there sudden? Zaccheus was converted in coming down from the sycamore-tree and between the branch and the ground. But you say that was because Christ was here on earth. That is not the explanation of it. People were converted faster after Christ left the earth than when he was here. After he went away, they were converted, three thousand in a day and five thousand in a day, and these thousands of converts were stubborn Jews at that.

Professor Drummond describes a man who went into one of the after-meetings at Northfield, and who said he wanted to become a Christian. He was greatly agitated. What was the trouble? He did not wish to tell.

Finally he said: "The fact is, I have overdrawn my account." That was his polite way of putting it. He had been stealing. "Did you take your employer's money?" "Yes." "How much did you take?" "I don't really know." "Have you an idea that you stole as much as $1,500 last year?" "I am afraid it was as much as that." Now suppose Professor Drummond did not believe in sudden conversions. How would he deal with that man? He would say, "Look here, sir, I do not believe in sudden work; don't you steal more than a thousand dollars next year, and the next year not more than five hundred dollars, and in the course of years you will get so that you will not steal at all. If your employer catches you, explain it to him and tell him you are getting converted." That is your slow conversion for you, and it is a mockery. The fact is, conversion is sudden or it is not at all. The climax of it is sudden. Churches of God, let us push men to turn at once from their evil lives. Let us present Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and urge men to the instantaneous, whole-hearted acceptance of him as such. If Christ has wrought salvation out to completion, and if he offers this completed salvation to men, the only reasonable thing for men to do is to take it, and take

it at once, and then go and work from gratitude and live for Christ who has saved them.

The third thing which I found in Northfield, and which I feel should be in every Christian Church, is this:

3. *The enthronement of the Bible as the book of God, and as the sole authority of faith and manners.*

The Bible, and the full Bible, is in Northfield. Every claim for faith is tested by the Book. Every practice proposed is applied to the line and the plumb-line of the divine commandment. The Book is never allowed to be the subject of debate. Questions about its composition and inspiration and fallibility never get a hearing. Not that Northfield means to be narrow, but because that is not its method of confirming the Scriptures and establishing its claims. Let others choose what other method they wish. Northfield claims the right to choose its method, and its method is *the subjective method.* It takes the Word just as it is, and lets it speak for itself to the heart and to the needs of men; and thus prove itself and thus work its way into the lives and loves of men. Now that is a fair method, and in the long run it has been found to be the most effective method. Men of Northfield believe in

the Bible because, by means of a careful and thorough study of the Bible, the Bible has found them. Their hearts respond to it. They feel that they need it.

Following this method, the Bible is studied by whole chapters and by topic and by whole books. And to me it is self-evident that this is the only way of getting at what is in the Bible, viz.: the study of the Bible by whole books. This method requires a Bible in the hand of every man and woman in the audience. And that is what you see largely at Northfield. Is that what you see in our churches? How many Bibles are in the pew-racks of your church? How much Bible is used in our pulpits? A text is taken to start from, and that is about all. Many a man in the pew, if he saw a Bible in his pew-rack, would be like the editor in the West, who found a Bible on his desk one day on entering his office, and who, after turning its pages, sat down and dashed off a review of it and sent it to the press, supposing that it was the last work of some unknown author. But enough upon this point; I shall take it up again when I come to you with a study of some of the books of the Bible. I shall make this part of Northfield of practical service to this church.

The great thing which I saw at Northfield, and the thing which should above all be in every church, was this:

4. *The manifest power of the Holy Ghost working in and through consecrated men and making them powers for God.*

The baptism of the Spirit for power is the great corner-stone of Northfield. The need of this baptism is constantly taught. If you have not got this baptism, Christian, Northfield would bid you stand still and wait before God until God gives it to you. The one thing above all things which is asserted there, and asserted upon the authority of the Scriptures, is that this baptism can be secured by all who wish it and who are willing to submit to the conditions upon which it is bestowed. This is a great theme, and I mean on some near Sabbath to unfold it before you in the spirit of prayer and with fulness, opening to you the Book of God and showing you what the Word saith.

Usually our churches think they have a revival, and have power, if they can only add numbers to the membership. At Northfield that is not the criterion of a revived church, or of a church with power. A man once said that he had a great revival in his church, and when asked, "How many have you taken in?"

he replied, "We have not taken any in; we have put one hundred and fifty out." That man was of the Northfield type. Quality and not quantity meant revival and power with him. And that is correct. That is the New Testament idea. Back in New Testament times, one hundred and twenty Spirit-filled men and women, endued with power from on high, meant the coming and the growth of great Christendom.

In this matter of the power of the Holy Ghost, Northfield does not speculate. It has on its ground the proof and exemplification of its creed. Mr. Meyer, with his great spiritual power, which is felt in England and America, is Northfield's creed incarnate. And Mr. Moody himself is another incarnation. I have no hesitancy in saying that if the pulpits of Christendom, and the pews of Christendom, were filled with such men as Moody and Meyer, this world would become out and out for Christ before this century ran its course; and more than this, the kingdoms of the earth would be loyal from centre to circumference to the authority of God. There is no doubt about it. It is Holy Ghost power that we need and that our churches need.

I have been setting before your minds high

things—things which call for sacrifices upon the part of men and women—things which make religion look like a mighty conflict, a full life-work. Let me in closing present just this one point: If we make the sacrifices we shall be amply rewarded and honored by Him who calls us to make them. If we fight His battles we shall with him enjoy the victories. This story was told at Northfield, and it illustrates and enforces my point:

"That was a glad day in England in 1855 when the soldiers came back from the Crimean War, and the Queen gave them medals, called Crimean medals. Galleries were constructed for the two Houses of Parliament and for the royal families that they might witness the presentation when her Majesty came to give the soldiers their rewards. There was one there, and he was honored above all the others, because his fidelity led him to greater sacrifices. A cannon-ball took off one of his legs, but the brave fellow sprang up immediately and, taking hold of a tree, drew his sword and was ready to fight, even to death. Immediately another cannon-ball came crashing past and took off the other leg. They carried him, wounded, bleeding, and as they supposed dying, to the hospital. Strange enough, he came back to life

again, and when the day came for the awarding of the medals, they carried him upon a stretcher before her Majesty the Queen. To other soldiers the Queen simply gave medals by the hands of her secretary; but when she saw this man carried in on a stretcher, his face so thin and pale, she rose from her throne and stooped down by his side and pinned with her own hands the medal upon his breast, while the tears rained down the face of the brave soldier. The great witnessing throngs were electrified, and spontaneously greeted Queen and soldier with a great deafening shout of applause."

That is but a faint picture of the home-going and the reception of the redeemed of God in heaven, as they go up from the fight for truth and from their hard-earned victories to their eternal reward. The King himself shall crown them, and shall say to every faithful one: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

WHY ARE THERE NOT MORE CONVERSIONS?

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—ACTS ii. 47.

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."—ACTS v. 14.

"And a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."—ACTS xi. 21.

II.

WHY ARE THERE NOT MORE CONVERSIONS?

We cannot value too highly this book of the Bible which gives us our three texts. The striking stories which it weaves together into the history of the Apostolic times are every one of them charged with light and hope and inspiration for all coming ages. No book renders a greater service to the Church of God than the book of "*The Acts of the Apostles.*"

Let me illustrate: As we close "*The Gospels*" in our study of the Bible, we close them with the vision of Christ's ascension. The beautiful earthly life of Christ is ended; his miracles, which brought sight to the blind, health to the sick, life to the dead, are over. No more shall he walk and talk with the disciples. He has preached his last sermon on the Mount. What now? We have his gospel filled with lucid parable, golden promise, and holy principle

and expressions of love and tender reproof:—we have his gospel just as it fell from his lips: yes,—but what is to be the future of his gospel? We are anxious to know if his truth can make its way on its own merit. When he was here, his truth had in its favor that singular magnetic influence which came from his personal presence and from his audible voice. These gave it life and power and victory. By means of these it won Peter and James and John and the Twelve and the five hundred and the men and women who so thoroughly believed in him that they stood ready to sacrifice their all and die for him. Deprived of his magnetic personal presence, deprived of his living voice, can his truth make its way and conquer hearts and lives by the sheer force of its celestial beauty and grace and comfort? Or must it perish now? Can voices other than the voice of the Divine Master make it a power? Uttered by the voice of Peter and married to his personality: uttered by the voice of Paul and married to his personality: uttered by the voice of Philip and married to his personality: what power shall it have? The Book of the Acts answers this question for us and sets our hearts at rest.

When Jesus Christ ascended, he saw to it that

his truth should not lose its power, and it did not: and it has not. He ordained that his Gospel of Grace should go right on converting and saving men; and as he ordained, so it was. The Gospel reached and swayed three thousand souls on the Day of Pentecost,—souls from every land on the globe,—and it found in them three thousand new centres in the world, north and south and east and west. It found and conquered Paul, and through him blossomed and fruited into the grand Epistles of the New Testament. It found Lydia, and through her entered into the Oriental market and into Oriental commerce. It found Cornelius, and through him entered into the Roman army. It found the Ethiopian eunuch, and through him it made its way into the far-off land on the upper Nile. In the Book of the Acts we see the Gospel taking up its march through Europe on its way to America to bless us and save us. As our three texts tell us: there were "*daily additions* to the church." "*Multitudes were saved.*" "*Numbers were added unto the Lord.*"

Our three texts, and the Book of the Acts in which they are found, teach two things with which we start the study of our theme: "*Why are there not more conversions?*"

First, when there are no conversions, the fault is not in Christ, nor in God, nor in the Gospel. These are the same to-day that they were in the past.

Second, when there are no conversions, the reason is, the conditions of the former days are not the conditions of to-day. Bring back Apostolic conditions, and you will have Apostolic results.

I consider it a gain to reach these two points. I consider it a gain when we are willing to say: "God is not at fault; we are at fault for the low ebb of the spiritual tide." I consider it a gain when we recognize the fact that we do not have the apostolic conditions, and that this is the reason why so few are converted in our midst. I consider this a gain because the realization of the absence of these possible conditions is the first essential to the earnest endeavor to secure these conditions. There was earnest soul-seeking in Apostolic times; there was the absolute acceptance of the Book of God as the one infallible guide of man; there was the faithful preaching of Christ and him crucified; there was self-sacrificing living; there were pure and holy characters and personalities filled with Christ; and there was pentecostal power. We, the churches of our age, have lost many of these things. We have lost Pentecost to begin with, and that is a lamentable loss. You are not full of the Holy Ghost and of power, are

you? And yet, as Christians, that is the birthright of every one of you. It is not only your privilege, but your birthright. Give us back these Apostolic conditions, and there will be daily additions to the Lord right here: and multitudes of men and women will be saved right here. "*Why are there not more conversions?*" We have not the Apostolic conditions: that is the reason. The converting agents are not what they ought to be. We are the converting agents, and there is something wrong in us. Before conversions abound in our midst that wrong must be righted. My Christian brethren, we have struck an exceedingly practical subject. There is blame on the sinner's side, but there is blame also on the saint's side; and this last fact is the fact which I propose to consider. I wish to set every member of this church asking this question: "*Am I a help or a hindrance to the salvation of others?*" Church of God, look on your side of this question: "*Why are there not more conversions?*" There are churches and Christians that are spoiling religion every day:—they are offences, and stumbling-blocks. Is ours such a church? Am I such a Christian? It is ours to see that the unconverted have a fair show. Now they have not a fair show for

the conversion of their souls, until the Apostolic conditions have been brought back and they have been submitted to the influence of these. The conditions which convert! These we owe the non-converted, and these the non-converted have a right to demand from us. Hence I repeat my exhortation: "Church of God, look on your side of this question—*Why are there not more conversions?*"

I have already suggested my outline of thought. It is this: To find the hindrances to conversion by a study of the helps to conversion. Our three texts, and the Scriptures in which they are set, tell us what the helps to conversion are. These Scriptures set us right into the midst of conversions and allow us to fellowship with the converting agents of Apostolic times. *Now the hindrances to conversion are the opposites of the helps to conversion.* What are the opposites of these helps? That is the present question, and it is an all-important question.

By gathering together these opposites, and arranging them in their proper order, I have discovered many points relative to our theme. There are not more conversions,—

1. *Because the church as a converting agent is not up to par.*

In Apostolic times it is written: "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." "A great number believed." "Believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Can we account for this marvellous increase? Yes. How? By the Christian church. The church was up to par. Look at the church of those converting times! It was filled with the Spirit. It was unworldly. It was daily at work. It spared no sacrifice. It went through the world with the open Book in its hand: and to the Book it made its constant appeal. It believed everything that was in the Book. What Book? The Old Testament. It did not discount a single verse of that old Book. Look at what it preached. It preached the cross of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment before the Great White Throne. It preached that man was lost and that Christ came to seek and to save the lost. It declared "there is no other name under Heaven whereby man can be saved, but the name of Jesus." Look at what it did! It gave itself up to soul-saving, and allowed nothing else to distract its attention or use up its time and power. It sought to save: and it did save. It gave a welcome to everybody; and constantly made a public declaration of its mis-

sion; and constantly made a public offer of Christ and redemption through his name. It went after the lost. In the reception and treatment of the Holy Spirit: in the representation of Jesus the Master: in its desire to save and its effort to save,—it was up to par and above par. When the church is up to par and above par, there are conversions. That is the rule, and that rule is without a single exception. What we want in our day is churches of Jesus Christ up to par and above par.

The churches of our day have lost their power. The people are not impressed by them as the people were impressed by the churches of the first century. The world is not moved by them to faith in Christ. The great world has lost confidence in them. The impression is abroad that they are hard-hearted; that they are filled with pride; that they narrow the hospitality of the house of God and go by the blue book of man; that they are mere social clubs for the upper classes; that money, and standing in society, and social caste, are the things which determine a hearty welcome into the churches, and not souls in need of salvation. The impression is abroad that the churches exist for themselves and not for the world. It is true that there is one great and good Shepherd: but all the sheepfolds are

private property. There are multitudes of men in the community about us who respect the Christ of our Book, but who hate our Christian churches. In a large meeting of working-men which crowded Cooper Union, New York, some time ago, when the name of Christ was mentioned as the workman of Nazareth and as the poor man's friend, his name was greeted with a round of applause; but when, at the same meeting, the Christian churches were referred to, they were greeted with a storm of hisses. I tell you, fellow churchmen, when the crowds outside of the church hiss the church, it is high time for us to stop and ask for the cause and the reason why. It is high time for us to ask ourselves the question: Are we so different from Christ that he should be applauded and we should be hissed? Are we representing Christ aright to the world — his desire, his heart, his purpose to save, his welcome into the Household of Faith? He has sent us out to save the world. Are we in right relations to the world, and is saving the world the supreme object of our existence as Christian churches. *I verily believe God means to awaken the churches by the hiss of the world.* When the world blushes for the church, it is time for the church to blush for itself.

I am speaking plain words to the Church of God to-day, because I believe in the power of the church, and because I believe that each church gets just what it works for. When it works for conversions, and employs the means for conversions, it gets conversions. When it aims to make itself simply a home for the well-to-do, a home for social life, a place for mere entertainment, and the feeding of the pride of its fellowship, it succeeds in that. It becomes a mere club-house, with its music and oratory and opera and fine arts and sociables and receptions; it becomes a refined play-house. When it aims at nothing, it gets nothing, and becomes cold and lifeless and weak. As Christian churches we can have just what we want and seek. Hence our great responsibility as Christian churches.

What a contrast between the statistics given in the scriptures which furnish our texts and the statistics given by the religious press of the churches of our time! "Multitudes saved," "numbers added unto the Lord,"—such is the record of the Book of the Acts. The record of the religious press reads thus: In the year 1895, thirteen hundred Congregational churches of America and seventeen hundred Presbyterian churches of America report no additions by con-

fession of faith—no conversions! Over three thousand churches in the leading evangelical denominations of our Christian land failing to report conversions during the last year! How long will it take to convert the world to Christ at that rate? Add this report to the hiss of the world at the churches, and you will see the need of asking the question: "*Why are there not more conversions?*"

This is the greatest problem we have to consider; it is a problem that will not down; it is a live issue; and it is on our hands. The churches must settle it or it will settle the churches. Let us have the courage to look it fair in the face. Let us deal with it as it touches Brooklyn, and as it involves Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church. We are living in a city called "The City of Churches," and yet the fact is, more than half the people of our city do not go to church. How is it that here in this community, with tradition and custom in its favor, religion is professed by comparatively few? The churches are not reaching the people and saving souls as the primitive churches did. Why? Let us not be too cowardly to meet this question.

I believe that worldliness in the churches of our community is one reason why. Our

churches are not separated unto God as they should be. They are not half spiritual enough. They allow themselves to be patronized by the world; they allow themselves to indorse the world; they allow themselves to adopt the ways of the world. They do not exist and live for God and God only, as they should; and therefore, God does not dwell in them in a large and powerful degree: therefore, God does not give them his Spirit with power. God cannot trust them with the power of his Spirit. There is a Scripture in the Gospel according to John which comes in right here, and which throws a great light upon the weakness of the churches and the weakness of Christian men and women. It explains why these are not filled with the Holy Spirit and with power. It is John ii. 3. "Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast days, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did: but Jesus did not commit himself unto them." God cannot commit himself to a half-hearted people. The power of the Holy Ghost is religiously withheld from those who, while professing God's name, are serving divers lusts and pleasures, and are hand and glove with the world:—who are carnal Christians, and are living a carnal life. Christ will not commit him-

self unto us until he can trust us. From all you know of this church, for our interest is especially centred here, do you think Christ has committed himself to us? Could he do this without compromising his name? Is everything here in accord with his mind? Could he bestow upon us as a church the gift of the Holy Spirit, and be sure that the Spirit's power would be used solely for his glory? May God get us ready for the baptism of the Holy Ghost with power. When God has all there is of us, then he will give himself to us without reserve: but not until then will he give himself to us without reserve. Let us not complain of the lack of conversions until we make right and effective the converting agent.

To help us in making right the church, the converting agent, allow me to bring forward the following Scriptures, which describe what the church is in God's intention and what the church ought to be in fact: Hear the Scripture:

"For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. vii. 6). "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx. 26). "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord: . . . and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

These are clear Scriptures, and they set forth the power of the church. The church of God is a power as a converting agent only when there is a broad line of demarcation between it and the world; and between its life and the world's life. When the men of the world come to the church of God and find it worldly, they are shocked. They lose the respect and the awe with which they have been accustomed to regard it, and they at once write it down in their estimation. When the church of God is written down in the estimation of men, it ceases to be a converting influence with men.

I believe that God has a controversy with the churches in our midst. He brings grave charges against them. He says to them: "I have commissioned you to reach the people, but you are not reaching the people. I have commissioned you to bring souls to salvation, but you are not bringing souls to salvation. I have commissioned you to guard my Holy Book, but you

are not guarding my Holy Book: your ministers are putting interrogation points against this part of it, and against that part of it, and the result is the unbelieving world is putting an interrogation point against the whole of it. If the people of the churches do not rise up and protest against this backhanded destruction of the citadel of their faith, I will raise up advocates and defenders of the Book outside of the church and take the glory of its defence away from my people. I have commissioned you to preach the Gospel, but your ministers are preaching everything else but the Gospel: they are preaching science and literature and politics and criticism and socialism; they are putting their theories in the place of '*Thus saith the Lord.*' They are preaching salvation through development instead of salvation through the blood of Christ; they are hiding the cross of Christ and making the cross of no effect. This is the state of affairs at this very hour, and the people love to have it so."

You see, God's charge is brought not only against the ministers in the pulpit, his charge is brought also against the people in the pews. He holds the people responsible for what they tolerate in the pulpit. The pew as well as the

pulpit make the church. It is the indorsement of the pew that makes the utterances of the pulpit a power.

I saw this illustrated grandly the other day in the salvation of souls. Cooper Union was crowded to the door with an audience that was not a churchgoing audience—an audience, too, composed largely of men. The simple Gospel of Christ was being preached in an honest, straightforward way. The text was: "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." The power of God was at work there mightily, and over two hundred men rose to their feet to ask prayer, and to signify their intention to start out on the new and the divine life. What was it that produced these results? The utterances of the preacher solely? They had much to do with these results, for they were the utterances of the Gospel: but these results were not solely due to these utterances. As I watched and analyzed that meeting I found that the grand results sprang as much from the faith of the Christian listeners as from the faith of the preacher. There was one prominent Christian citizen sitting on the very front of the platform. As far as I am able to judge, the spiritual movement of that hour began with him. At one part of the sermon he became so

moved that the tears rolled down his cheeks and he restrained them not. These tears were the visible tokens of his absolute surrender to the truth presented by the preacher. His tears and surrender moved others to tears and surrender, and thus the movement of faith and surrender swept the hall and moved multitudes to tears and surrender. Before that one man, on the front of the platform, surrendered himself to the truth, there was but moderate interest in the gospel message of that day; but out of his faith grew a whole community of faith and the conversion of sinners through faith. Oh for the enthusiasm and the faith of the people of the Christian churches of our land! That is what the Gospel is waiting for, and that is what sinners are waiting for. When the people want and demand that the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be preached, they will get it; and when they get it and become enthusiastic over it and indorse it by their tears and their self-surrender, their enthusiasm and their surrender and their indorsement will become contagious and sinners by the hundreds will be converted.

But it is time for me now to present the second point of this sermon. There are not more conversions—

2. *Because the individual Christian as a converting agent is not up to par.*

Multitudes were saved in apostolic times; but look at the individual Christians of those times! Peter, James, John, Paul. These men were duplicates of Christ. Give us duplicates of Christ and we shall have conversion now and here, just as they had conversion then and there.

My fellow-men, let us open our hearts to this point upon which we are dwelling—viz.: *God expects converts from the individual Christian as well as from the Christian churches.* He calls Christians to account individually. As Jesus Christ multiplied himself, God expects us to multiply ourselves. He expects our Christian faith to bring forth other Christian faith. And it will, if we are what we ought to be, and if we do what we ought to do. This solemn fact presses home upon the individual conscience this pointed question: "*What am I as a converting force in the world?*" I wish to locate the responsibility for the salvation of souls. Christian man, Christian woman, the responsibility rests with you. You are one of God's spiritual seeds, and God expects a harvest from you. God comes to you this hour and asks you: "Where are your

converts? I gave you sons and daughters to bring up for me—where are they? Are they one with you in your Christian faith and life? I have given you brothers and sisters; I have given you a Sabbath-school class; I have given you partners in business; I have given you friends and neighbors; have you reproduced yourself in them? Where are your converts? If you have associated with people and have not led them to Christ, you have done them more harm than good." If you have not secured their conversion, you have neglected them; or else you have misrepresented Christ to them and have given a wrong idea of the true Christian life; or else your Christianity has been so ordinary as to be repulsive to them rather than attractive. Your conversion is not up to par, and men have seen this and have refused to invest in it. And I do not blame them.

When men can get a better conversion outside of the church than we Christians get inside of the church, no one can find fault with them for holding on to their conversion and rejecting our conversion. Let us be honest and admit that this is one of the reasons why there are so few conversions: men outside of the church are not willing to exchange their

conversion for the conversion of multitudes of people who are in the church. The conversion we offer them is below par, when judged by ourselves as converts. We want to get a little more saved ourselves than we are, and then we can save others. We must offer the people of the world something better than they already have. We must show them Christians up to par, and offer them a Christianity that is above par, if we are ever to reach them. The men of the world are moved Christ-ward only by an anointed tongue and a transfigured life. They demand as their guide a living Gospel and a living Christian. They respect only Spirit-baptized souls. As Emerson puts it with regard to eloquence so we may put it with regard to salvation: "There is no true eloquence unless there is a man behind the speech,"—even so there must be a saved man behind the offer of salvation in order to make that salvation seem real to the unsaved. When you tell an unsaved man that you are saved, he will ask you, "*Saved from what?*" And if you are to have any influence with him, you must be able to show him from what you are saved. You must show him something which you have reached, through faith in Jesus Christ, which he has not reached: something which it is profitable to

reach and desirable to reach. We do not convert others, because our own conversion is below par.

Am I wrong in insisting as I do upon a better brand of ourselves as Christian converts and upon a new and higher and a more radical and more thorough conversion of our own hearts and lives? Not if we want more conversions. It is personality that influences us. It is the gospel incarnate that is the gospel in power. It is the man, it is the woman, that tells. It is the convert himself that in turn converts. Seek, then, for yourself a converting personality.

Dr. Watson, in his Yale lecture on preaching, sets before theological students in a beautiful way the supreme importance of putting a fine personality back of the Gospel message in order to make it a power. He does this by giving a life-picture of a preacher with an ideal character. This preacher is not over-blessed with mentality; but he lives his religion. To others he is commonplace; but to his own people he is the best preacher in the world. Why? His people know him. They read his character between the lines of his address. Sitting in the pew, they edit his sermons anew with foot-notes, which by and by eclipse the origi-

nal. His people are fairly overcome by his lovely illustrations, his deep arguments, his moving appeals. But these are not newly written; they are not written at all: they are deeds ten, twenty, thirty years old. The people put the man into his sermons, and this makes his sermons great and effective.

In bringing my sermon to its conclusion, I wish to make but one practical point. It is this: The facts which we have discovered in our study lay upon the converting agents—the church and the individual Christian—a present and an imperative duty.

It is the duty of the church and of the individual Christian openly to confess their faults and publicly profess a change of life.

For example, this church should issue its manifesto to the community of Brooklyn on the Hill. It should confess its deadness. It should tell why it exists. It should confess its sins and shortcomings. It should speak truthfully of the things upon which it has spent its force. It should name just what it has done for the conversion of souls. It should show what it might have done, and confess what it has left undone. It should tell the number of people who have been lost out of its fellowship. There are ways of being lost, out of the

very centre of the church. This is the way a man falls out of the church: he is absent, and no one inquires about him or goes after him to bring him back. He is missed nowhere—then he is expected nowhere; and finally, as a natural consequence, he goes nowhere: he has no church-home: he is lost. In this public manifesto the church should promise what it means to do. It means to have some open free service at some regular time for the public—free and open to everybody. It means to live not for itself, but for God, and for the lost world, and for the immediate community. It means to see that the Bible is honored, and the cross honored, and a pure Gospel preached and practised. I wish I could set every man and woman belonging to the membership of Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church at work writing a manifesto to be issued by the Church to the public. I should give a great deal to have such a collection. It would be a great revelation. It would give our membership a new insight into what a church of Jesus Christ ought to be. It would give us a vivid knowledge of our failings as a church; it would show us our possibilities; it would lead us to do things differently, and it would be a large step toward a revival of religion.

Every church of Jesus Christ in the United States ought to issue some such manifesto to the public. It would be good for the public, and it would be good for the churches. It would bring about a relation and an understanding between the churches and the public which would lead to a new church life, and to a multitude of conversions.

The confession of our faults! That is the duty of the hour. There was a man of God once who, during the early years of his Christian career, was noted for his extraordinary devoutness, zeal, and self-sacrifice; but gradually and imperceptibly to himself, he fell from his first love. He still abounded in good works of a certain kind, and was looked up to by ordinary Christians as a pattern of piety. But he was not up to the Lord's mark; so the Lord showed him whence he had fallen. He did this by bringing him into close contact with a man filled with the Spirit and burning with zeal for the salvation of souls. When he looked upon this man's work, by the law of contrast, there flashed on him the conviction that he had lost his first love. He said to himself: "I was once like that man: I felt as he does: I rejoiced as he does: I prayed as he does: I labored as he does: but I am not like him now.

O my God! I am a backslider from thee and from all good!" The discovery almost overwhelmed him. He realized its bitterness, and agonized over its consequences until his distress reached a climax. Then kneeling down he prayed in an agony, telling God that if he would restore him his first love, he would confess his heart-backsliding to his brethren, and do all in his power to counteract the evil effects of his coldness and unfaithfulness. The Lord heard his prayer and answered it. This was what the Lord wanted of his servant, in order to his pouring in the oil and wine of his love and consolation. Like the disciples on the day of Pentecost, he rose from his knees filled with the Spirit. The next day there was an official meeting of the church at which he had to take part. At the appointed time some dozen of the leading men assembled. After the business was gone through with, he asked to be allowed to make a few remarks: and then with the simplicity of a child he related his experience of the last few days. He confessed to his brethren his backsliding, and told them how the Lord had convicted him of it, and how graciously he had restored him to his first love. The brethren present were melted to tears: they sobbed like children.

When he finished they all broke forth into a general confession and told of their unfaithfulness. They remained confessing their sins until midnight. As one after another poured out his sins in confession and supplication, the Holy Ghost fell on them, and there commenced in that room on that memorable night a genuine revival of religion in their church, which swept hundreds into the Kingdom. This is the power of confession.

Who is going to start the confession of backsliding in this church which will bring us a revival in the individual heart and life, and in the heart and life of this great congregation? Who is going to start the confession among us which will result in the taking away of the barriers which stand between this church and the conversion of souls? God asks the question, Who? the church asks the question, Who? the lost soul in our community asks the question, Who? *Who?*

Topic: "*When we become Christians and churchmen—what when?*"

OUR TASK AS CHRISTIANS AND WHAT WE NEED FOR EFFECTIVENESS.

"Compel them to come in."—LUKE xiv. 23.

57-58

III.

OUR TASK AS CHRISTIANS AND WHAT WE NEED FOR EFFECTIVENESS.

The task of Christians is self-evident. The very name which Christians bear reveals it. It is this: To be as Christ in the community and to do Christ's work in the world. As Christians we have been saved that we may save others. The magnet has been magnetized that it may magnetize. Our task is to do as much for those around us as has been done for us: to win some friend to Christ as some friend has won us to Christ. To tell the story of our salvation. To transmit Christianity to posterity. To keep the home for God. To purify society by transfusing it with the Spirit of God. To erect the cross in view of every creature. To put an open Bible into every hand. To save the perishing race. To Christianize commerce, and fashion, and art, and pleasure.

To incarnate Jesus of Nazareth in all the institutions and governments of earth. To keep the church loyal to the truth of the crucified Christ; pure in doctrine and pure in life, and enthusiastic in its saving work, and full of the Spirit of fire. To ring the world round and round with hosannas to the Son of David, and to keep it so ringed. Such is our mission, and such, too, is the great purpose of the reigning God.

While this is the purpose of the reigning God, yet we ourselves must fulfil our own mission and do our own work. God will co-operate with us, but he will not take our place or do that which we neglect to do. Let us write this down as a certainty—*God will never do that which we ourselves can do.* This has always been so. He will multiply the loaves and fishes, but he will not distribute them. The disciples must do that, for they can do that. He will raise Lazarus from the dead, but he will not roll away the stone from the sepulchre of Lazarus; the friends must do that, for the friends can do that. He will purchase redemption for man and pay the great price for it, because only he can do that; but man must carry the offer of this purchased redemption to his fellow-man, because this is what man

is able to do. This all the saved are commissioned to do.

God has purposed great things for his people; but they are conditioned. The condition is this: God's people *must take* these things. It is with us as it was with the Hebrews. God made them the promise of the Holy Land. He drew for them the outlines of the Land of Promise, and held the map up to view for their inspiration, and told them that all should be theirs; but he made a condition. That condition was this: they must march through the length and the breadth of the land and measure it off with their own feet—that is, they must take it. These are God's words to Joshua: "Everywhere that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that give I unto thee." To tread the land they had to eject the enemies who pre-occupied it. The Hebrews never trod more than one-third of the property mentioned in God's grant; consequently they never had more than one-third of what God intended them to have. They had just what they measured off with their own feet and no more. God, in His holy purpose and promise, has given us the world for Jesus Christ our Master; but that purpose and promise will never be realized until we work for it and make the

world Christ's by toiling, triumphant, evangelistic work.

Are we taking the world for Christ as rapidly as we should? Is everybody at work, and at work in downright earnest? Are you at work, and are you satisfying yourself with your work? Are you a hot saint? What do you know about "compel them to come in"? Oh, what an amount of sham there is in our religious profession, and what an amount of hollow mockery there is in our pretension of work for Christ! Our prayer for revivals and for a spiritual visitation is for the most part a mere form and is sheer hypocrisy. The church of God can have a revival of religion any day—a revival as deep and as powerful as it is possible for her to ask—if she will only comply with the conditions upon which God has promised to grant it.

Are we satisfied with the way things are in Christendom? Are there not coldness, and deadness, and dearth in the Christian churches, which we cannot help feeling? Is there not a great want somewhere? There is a vast amount of effort put forth, there is enormous expenditure, there is the multiplication of instrumentalities on every hand: but the results—where are these? The results do not correspond with the outlay. What is the secret? What is the cause of the

failure? It is this: We are not honoring the Holy Ghost as we should; we are ignoring him and his functions and rule; we are leaving him out of our work, and hence we are working without that enduement of power which comes from on high. But what is written? This: "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." It is the power of the Holy Spirit versus the might of intellect, and learning, and eloquence, and position, and wealth, that carries in it success in Christian effort.

The church to-day is like Israel of old—"she hath multiplied her defenced cities, and her palaces, but she hath forgotten the God of Israel, in whom her strength is." The strength of the church is the Spirit of the Almighty God. The strength of the church is a perpetual Pentecost. It is by Pentecostal gifts and methods that the church is to win the people. God has not abrogated these yet, and until he does we must work by them, or else we will work in vain.

How often during these later times do we hear discussions concerning the "lapsed masses"! And how often is the question asked, "Why have the masses lapsed from the churches?" I beg leave to answer that accord-

ing to my way of thinking: the masses have not lapsed from the churches; *it is the churches that have lapsed from the masses.*

It is the churches that have become indifferent to the fallen. The churches are full of elder brothers, *i.e.*, the people who have no real and helping sympathy with the fellows who are down; who prate continually about the sins of the masses, the vices of the masses, the heartlessness and the ingratitude of the masses, instead of talking about the salvation of the masses. These are the people who have moved the churches away from the masses, and now slander the masses by charging them with dropping the church.

My friends, we talk of the unconverted and of their duty of repentance. I tell you that there is a repentance which we people of the churches need. It involves mental suffering, but we should go through it. We should repent that the flesh is in us after our regeneration, and very much in us. We should repent that we have been unfaithful to God's saving grace; we have been untrue to Christ's saving love; we have been neglectful of the dying world; we have hidden the cross from the view of the unsaved. All this demands our speedy repentance.

When the churches of God do their duty, the

people will do theirs. When the Christian churches get back their Pentecost, it will be written of the nineteenth century, as it was written of the first century, "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." "The trouble is that the churches have lost their way to the 'upper room.' Let a church only find its way back there and obtain a Pentecost from God; let pulpit and pew be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and the people will come running in to see the burning. That church will not need to cater to the fleshly elements in mankind, nor deal in baits to catch the masses; the people will come climbing into her pews as Zaccheus of old climbed into the branches of the sycamore-tree, when he wanted to see the Lord. The people still want Jesus."

My fellow-men, the state of affairs which now exists ought not to exist; there is no necessity compelling things to be so. It is this state of affairs—viz.: the disparity between results and expenditures and the coldness of the great multitudes of Christian confessors—and the tarrying of the millennial glory of Zion, that call for a present and careful discussion of the question before us: "*What do we need for effectiveness?*"

I propose now to enumerate some of these needs as they present themselves to my view. I mention this to begin with—viz.:

1. *The very first requisite for successful Christian work is a start.*

You may think this is not worth a mention: but it is. It is what some of you as yet do not know. You have not yet started to work for Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls—I mean started to work in dead earnest. With the vast majority of people, this is the most difficult thing of all, *to start work;* to tell the story of their salvation the first time; to give the first invitation; to make the first effort to invade the personality of another and bring its soul face to face with Jesus Christ. To make a start, they have to overcome timidity and prejudice and foreboding, and fear of giving offence, and apprehension lest the besought may be driven away from Christ rather than attracted to him. How many questions a man asks himself when he begins evangelistic testimony-bearing work: when he actually seeks to save his first soul for Christ! "Am I the best party to speak to that soul? If I speak to him, am I sure that I shall say the right word? Does God want me to speak to him? How will he receive me? Oh, who is sufficient for this

great soul-saving work?" It is hard to begin, but, Christian, do your duty and God will stand by you. The Spirit of God will see to the results. With the results you have nothing to do: you have to do only with your duty. The Spirit will supplement your deficiency. It is the Spirit that prompts you, and you shall find, when you do your part, that the one to whom you speak has marvellously been made ready for your word. The Spirit will overrule your blunders and straighten out your imperfections of service.

Canon Wilberforce tells this story of Herkomer, the great English portrait painter: Herkomer had an old father who lived with him in his splendid palace at Bushy. In his early life his father used to model in clay. In his old age his great fear was that his work would show imperfection. It was his one sorrow, as he retired to bed every night, that he had lost his art. Knowing this, his talented son went into his father's studio after he was asleep, and took up the tools and made his father's feeble attempts as beautiful as art could make them. When the old man came down in the morning and looked at his work, he used to rub his hands in perfect delight and exclaim: "Ah, I can do it as well as I ever did!

See! The work speaks for itself!" In some such way the Spirit will supplement your work and make up for your defects. Begin, trust him, test him, and see for yourself if he will not.

It is in Christian work as it is in making a fortune, the hardest part is the start. The first thousand is the hardest thousand to win. John Jacob Astor in his old age is reported to have said that given these two alternatives, to start from where he started with nothing and work his way into possession of ten hundred dollars, or to go on from the ten hundred and amass the large amount he had gathered together, he would accept the latter alternative. To start is the difficulty. But what after the start? Why this: comparatively speaking, the work will take care of itself. You do not need to ask that question. Save your first soul, and the joy coming to you from that will give you such an impetus in Christ's work that you will forget all about difficulties. The work itself will bind you to itself. The work itself will bring you accumulated strength, and knack and tact, and a knowledge which will become wisdom. You sow strength and you reap strength. You sow improved opportunities, and you reap opportunities waiting to be improved. You

sow the power to save one soul, and you reap the power to save two souls. Christian, you express your desire to work for Christ. That is right. But do not stop with expressing desire: begin to work, and begin at once. Begin, begin, and everything will follow in due order.

A gentleman in New York put into my hand a little booklet entitled "A Day's Time-Table." The booklet bears right on this point. The heroine of the book is a young woman who lives in the home of wealth and fashion. She is a Christian. In her devotional reading of the Bible one day she came across this verse in Deut. xi. 21: "That your days may be as the days of heaven upon the earth." She said to herself, "I have no such days on earth." Then she began to wish that God would give her a time-table from Heaven for each day, and fill it with duty to be done each hour of the day. That would make earth-days Heaven-days. She longed to do Christian work and be useful; but how, she did not know. A voice within said to her, Only begin and God will see to coming time. A poor girl that day came to her father's house on business. Her father being absent from home, it fell to her lot to talk with the girl. She accepted that as her opportunity from God. The girl was an

invalid and needed help and sympathy, and she gave these to her. In doing her duty to this poor girl she started to work for Christ. The result was this: the work of that one hour grew and shaped itself and developed slowly into an organization for invalids, then into a seaside home, and then into lives brightened and restored to health, and then into hearts won for Jesus Christ. Was this all? Not all. She herself was developed all around in her religious nature; she was brought into the broadening fellowship of other consecrated workers and was enriched by their experience and aspirations. A sick minister whom she met helped her as he carried on his work in his sick-room and served the Lord in what he was accustomed to call his "sofa-diocese." He taught her to conduct all her transactions with the great Unseen. Her Bible became to her a new book. Before this it brought her only a Gospel of salvation: but now it brought her in addition a *Gospel of guidance*. Some new power touched its verses and chapters with a holy light, and made it all *the time-table of life* that she felt she needed. Her whole life became a service of God, and everything she did became "Kingdom-work." She started, and God took care of the rest. Our first

need in order to the successful meeting of our task is to start. Have you started?

2. *Our second need for effectively meeting our task is the stimulus and help which one gets from keeping one's-self in touch with a live Christian fellowship.*

One of the uses of the church of Christ with its fellowship is just this: to secure for its members the necessary equipment for spiritual service. It provides a common fund of experience, and tact, and faith, and knowledge, and enthusiasm from which all are permitted to draw. Here in the temple of God it is expected that Christian will communicate with Christian backward and forward by way of loving exchange. It is here that we give and receive. Every church, every temple of God should be such an exchange. There is a charming tradition coming down to us from the rabbins relative to the site upon which Solomon's Temple was erected, which is in point here. The place is said to have been owned in common by two Hebrew brothers. One of the brothers had a family, the other had not. On this very spot was sown a field of wheat. On the evening of the harvest-day, the wheat having been gathered into shocks in the field, the elder brother said to his wife: "My younger

brother is unable to bear the burden and heat of the day; I will arise and take of my shocks and place them with his without his knowledge." The younger, being actuated by the same benevolent motive, said within himself: "My elder brother has a family, and I have none; I will arise and take of my shocks and place them with his." The next day they were both astonished to find that their respective shocks remained undiminished. This course of events transpired for several nights, when each resolved in his own mind to go on guard and solve the mystery. They did so, and on the following night they met each other with their respective shocks in their arms on their way to make their loving exchange. It was upon ground hallowed by such loving associations that the temple of Solomon was erected. This story of the rabbins is a parable; it teaches that every temple of God in which the people of God fellowship should be a place where brethren shall exchange mutual gifts and where they shall communicate the one to the other.

We can receive much from one another, because we have a great influence the one with the other. We search one another, we rebuke one another, we chill one another, we stimulate one another, we educate one another, we

interpret one another, and we do this by our simple presence. We see this illustrated in a hundred ways in daily life. A handsome woman, for example, interprets and measures the homeliness of all women not handsome, when these come into her presence or when she goes into their presence. A tall man, for example, interprets and reveals and measures the shortness of short men who come into his presence. Short men know this. There are short men who know it so well that they positively refuse to go into a room where there is a single tall man. I do not blame them. They desire to have all the credit of what little height belongs to them, without any invidious comparison. We judge one another. We reveal one another by our simple presence; therefore the presence of a hopeful, constant, efficient Christian worker is one of the greatest powers for Christ and for the cause of Christian work. He is an inspiration among workers. He creates an atmosphere of enterprise in which great plans for God are formed. He instructs. He suggests methods of work. Brethren, keep constantly in the fellowship of such.

Let me illustrate the way we are equipped for our Christian task by getting lessons from a living fellowship in the household of faith.

Here is a man who wins souls to Christ by the score. But how does he do it? By aiming at great things? No. By aiming at comparatively small things. He individualizes. He works upon souls one at a time. He covets some particular man for Christ, and goes to him and reasons with him, and keeps going to him until the man surrenders to Christ. He makes him a study day and night. From this man we learn to individualize in our Christian work. To master this lesson is one of the needed equipments in the service of saving souls. For souls are saved, not in the mass, but one by one.

Here is another man who makes great use of prayer in carrying on the work of the Lord. With him prayer is always the precursor of work: just as it was with Peter when he opened the doors of the Christian church to the great Gentile world. From him we learn the value of prayer as an instrument and a preparation for Christian service. Here is a man who exalts the Bible in his work. I knew such a man, and he gave me a lesson that has been helpful to me in Christian work for many years. The Bible was a finality with him. He admitted of no appeal from it. In dealing with unsaved souls, he positively refused to discuss its merits

or demerits. He took for granted that it was the Word of God beyond all peradventure. He related to me one case illustrating his method of work. He fell in one day with a sceptical young college student, who felt that he had the arguments at his tongue's end which wholly annihilated Christianity. He made one statement after another against Christianity. My friend said "I simply met each statement with an apt quotation from the Bible." The young man kept replying: "Oh, that is from the Bible. I do not believe in the Bible." My friend said: "God says it, young man, whether you believe or not." A few weeks after, the young man came to him and said: "I am a Christian, and I want to thank you that you helped me to become such. It was the Bible you quoted that took hold of me and brought me to faith. If you had argued with me, I should have been an infidel still; but you just made God speak to me, and that did the work." You will save no souls if you do not believe in the Bible through and through and without a question or a doubt. It is the Book that carries weight with men. Men will a hundred cases out of one hundred and one believe the Book when they will not believe you. A man only who is full of the Book is well equipped for his Christian task.

Christian workers, associate with men in whom is the divine life, who are daily living in prayer, who are planning for God's cause, and spending themselves in his service; and from their presence go out to labor for your Master full of their contagion and enthusiasm, strong with their strength, alive with their hope, tactful with their versatility, all on fire with their love for souls, partakers of their unwavering faith, and well equipped with their experience.

Another requisite for our Christian task is:

3. *An effective Christian personality.*

This is our chief furniture in Christian work. This is a requisite away beyond any that I have as yet named. It is the incarnation of all the other requisites. You may be able to quote most fluently the Bible in answer to the objections of the sceptic, but if you have not a real and effective Christian personality to put back of your apt quotation, you will spoil the Bible and render its most beautiful and pungent sayings powerless.

It is the man, or the woman, back of the Scripture quotation that gives it its force. It is the man back of the sermon that makes the sermon a power.

Spurgeon tells us that he went once to hear

George Muller preach, that man whom God has so lately crowned with his eternal crown; that man who did so much for the orphans and who carried on his great enterprises on the capital of simple faith. He says of George Muller's sermon: "Oh, it was such a soul feast to me." "Why? Was the sermon grand, Mr. Spurgeon?" "No, it was not. There was no grandeur about it. It was as plain a sermon as ever I heard. It was the man in the sermon that moved me and thrilled me. It was George Muller's spiritual strength poured into my emptiness that fed me. If many another man had preached it, it would have been profitless to me. But it was profitable to me because it came out of George Muller's life and because George Muller was back of it." My experience in hearing George Muller was the very opposite of Mr. Spurgeon's. When he was in this country years and years ago, he preached here in Brooklyn. I came over from New York to hear the pastor of the church in which he preached. The pastor was away, and I was told George Muller of England was going to preach. He did preach. He took the whole of the twenty-third Psalm and expounded that. I thought it was as flat as anything I ever listened to from the pulpit. And I went away

unfed and disappointed. Was it George Muller's fault? It was not. It was David Gregg's fault. David Gregg was a very young man then, a hide-bound close-communion Scotch Covenanter, and he did not know a single thing about George Muller. He had never heard of him before. He did not know the personality that evolved the sermon and which was behind the sermon. It would be different now if I heard George Muller preach. I know George Muller now and I love George Muller now; and a sermon from him now, with his personality back of it, would be a gospel feast to me.

In calling us to labor for him, God first of all bids us look after what we are by way of faith and sincerity, love, and holiness of life. He wishes us to be up to the full weight spiritually, because he will then have in us a mighty witness of his power and purpose. He knows that men can believe that there is a God up in Heaven when they see a God dwelling in our heart down here. The greatest evidence of spiritual religion is a holy life. The best service you can render to the Master is to be like him. Character is service. A man keeping himself pure in the midst of impurity, a man who keeps his love in the midst of the bitter sarcasm of a cruel world, a man who repro-

duces the holy character of Christ in this sinful generation, is the most irrefragible argument that God is true, and that God's Word is true. The man who lives the resurrection-life is the strongest proof of the resurrection.

The chief thing to be looked after in carrying on the work of Jesus Christ on earth is to see to it that Jesus Christ is truly represented among men by those who professed to be his and to live his life. If as Christians we do not in our own personalities give the world the very best representation of him, he will not be appreciated, he will not be accepted by others. Two men stopped on the street to talk. Just then a street-organ struck up a tune. The hand-organ was a mean, rickety instrument, and did nothing but wheeze and groan and give forth distortions and sounds in spasms. "Let us move on and get rid of that abominable tune," said the one to the other. His friend replied: "The tune is all right. Do you not know what it is?" "No, and I do not care to know. I never can be made to like it." "Why not? it was written by Handel, and is called 'See the Conquering Hero Comes.'" "Well then, Handel wrote a very poor thing." "I cannot allow Handel's work to be slandered thus: you must come with me to the Handel

festival, and hear that tune as it ought to be rendered." A month later the admirer of Handel took his friend to the Handel festival. As the man listened to that sound of harping symphonies and sevenfold hallelujahs, he was especially carried away with one part. He went into raptures in his praises of it. Asking his friend what that part was called, he was utterly amazed at the reply: "That is 'See the Conquering Hero Comes!'" There are Christians and Christians, and there is as much difference between them as there is between a creaking hand-organ that croaks out, in paroxysms and gasps, Handel's great production, and the finely selected and managed orchestra that makes Handel's great production thrill. We wish Christ presented to men at his best, that men may love him. Only the fine Christian personality can present him at his best—but it can.

We have all known men who have made Christ real to us. Do you remember how it was said of a good woman by a chivalrous man, "that it was a liberal education to have known her." Why? Had she written books? No. Had she led some great movement and been a brilliant figure in society? No. Had she wit and genius, a mind of unusual power

and penetration? No. What did she have? She had the grace of sweet purity and goodness. She had complete sympathy with Jesus Christ. Christ lived in and through her. She was in the grandest and broadest sense a Christian woman. There are such people in the world—people of such a noble order that when we meet them we instinctively recognize that they are the finest products of human life. We come out of their presence invigorated and strengthened and refreshed. We love goodness better for having seen them, and feel a new loyalty to the truth for having talked with them. We know them by the brightness of their eye, and the purity of their face, and the calmness of their brow. The gentle dignity of their manner and the influence of their holy lives make us feel and know that they breathe the air, and wear the dress, and speak the language, and frequent the court of the King of kings. By their motives and words and deeds and principles and sacrifices and devotion they make the discipleship of Jesus a real and beautiful confession, and the personality of Christ one of the vital forces of the world. They "compel us to come in."

If what I have said be true, the practical question with you and me is, What kind of a

personality are we offering Jesus Christ to be used in His service? How much of Christ can those whom we beseech to become reconciled to Christ see in us? Are we by our personalities spoiling the texts of Scripture which we quote, or are we adding power to them? What are we for personal sanctity? Is sin in our souls as an admiration, or as an approval, or as a toleration? If so, it will hinder our effectiveness as Christians. We should keep our souls as the Holy of Holies. Be assured a conception within will some day become a transception without. We should give no tolerance to sin or to the low or to the second class. We should be pure-souled and pure-handed. We should be men and women of pure eyes. Pure eyes carry in them the flame of fire and the light by which they are able to see the things of God; now only those who see the things of God can tell them to others.

But let no one be discouraged at these high things which I now present as needs for effective Christian service. They are possible to all under the indwelling and operation of God's Holy Spirit. Even the humblest saint can be a correct representative of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his soul may be just as true as the Christ in the soul of the greatest saint in the

Christian fellowship. The smallest rainbow in the tinest drop of water, which hangs on the sooty eave of your house, and which catches the sunlight—the smallest rainbow in that tiny water-drop has precisely the same lines and the same colors and the same order of beauty as the great arch that strides in grandeur across half the sky. My fellow-men, having the right personality for effective Christian work is narrowed down to just this with us: It is a simple question of complete surrender of self to God, to be moulded and purified and developed and filled with his divine indwelling. It is a question altogether of the human will. Do you will to have that personality? You can have it.

When we reach these requisites of which I have spoken to-day—what a grand church we shall have! what a power we shall exert in this community! what soul-saving shall be witnessed in our midst—each unit will be a host in himself and in herself, and the united power of all for God will be irresistible. We shall have a full church, a praying church, an indoctrinated church, a united church, a church whose members weep with those who weep as well as rejoice with those who rejoice; a sympathetic church, a worshipful church, a church

of saved families—families unbroken in the faith and service of Christ; a church equipped with power from on high, full of the Holy Ghost and of fire; a spiritually-minded church, a testimony-bearing church, and, finally, a working church.

AM I WORLDLY?

'Ye are not of the world : . . . I have chosen you out of the world.'' JOHN XV. 19.

IV.

AM I WORLDLY?

"Am I worldly? This question has been pushing itself upon me for months. It has been uttering itself over and over again. I am literally compelled to meet it. It has formulated itself, and has urgently asked itself, because, in my late reading of the Bible, my mind has been arrested and overwhelmed by the great number of scriptures which refer to God's people and their relations to the world. In these scriptures the world is defined, and the man of God is defined, and the antagonism which exists between the world and the man of God is defined. These scriptures are plain-spoken and are their own interpreters. These scriptures run through both testaments of the Book. You find them in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament they are such as these:

"Deliver my soul . . . from men of the world, who have their portion in this life."

"Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are on the face of the earth."

"And ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

"In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, *holiness unto the Lord.*"

In the Old Testament the very names of God's people distinguish them and separate them from the world, and so does their constant association with God. When they are worldly, they are failures in life; when they are unworldly, they are a success. Lot was worldly: Abraham was unworldly. You know which of the two men was the great God-power in history and the source of blessing to mankind. The stories of these two men search us; and we instinctively ask ourselves as we read them: "Am I Lot? or, Am I Abraham?" The great souls of the Old Testament were all separated unto God.

This was the case with Moses.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to

enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

This was so in the case of Isaiah: separating himself unto God, he said:

"Here am I, send me."

This was so with Daniel; he was *in* Babylon, but he was not *of* Babylon; and everybody in the kingdom knew it. Everybody knew that he was the prophet of God, and that he belonged to Israel. This is the sum and substance of the teaching of the Old Testament, viz.: *The Covenant-people of God should live perpetually toward the holy place.*

Explicit as are these Scriptures of the Old Testament, and clear as their teachings are in declaring God's people to be a separated people, the Scriptures of the New Testament are still more explicit and outspoken and manifold. In turning the pages of the New Testament, we find that Jesus and all his apostles are one in emphasizing the unworldliness which should characterize the people of God. To begin with, there is nothing that Jesus teaches with greater frequency or with greater positiveness than this fact, that we are to be unworldly in our Christian life. Our text is in evidence here: "Ye are not of the world . . .

I have chosen you out of the world." In another place the Master warns us against the Mammon-spirit, and tells us plainly that we cannot live a double life; neither can we recruit the devil into the Lord's ranks:

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon: no man can serve two masters."

There is not room for two master-passions in one heart. It is Jesus who sets forth the profitlessness of the world's service, even when a man is successful in that service:

"What will it profit a man even though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

This must be an important matter—viz., our unworldliness—for Jesus makes it a subject of his prayers. His prayers give us an insight into things. For all Christians Jesus prays:

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me: While I was in the world I kept them in thy name. I pray not, that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so send I them into the world."

Would Jesus Christ have prayed thus for us

if our *unworldliness* were not a matter of supreme importance?

Passing from the Master, listen to his apostles. Paul, the chief of the apostles, is just as definite as Jesus himself in setting forth the duty of unworldliness. These are some of his words:

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God."

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

There is nothing uncertain about that message. Its teaching is clear. It declares that God and Belial cannot be reconciled in one brotherhood. They cannot exist together. There is a broad and ineffaceable line of demarcation between the church of God and the world. They are so far apart that no man can live in both at the same time. To try to do so

produces an absurd piety and a sham. You might as well try to mix light and darkness. They refuse to mix. Give Christianity the sway, and it will conquer the world and eradicate it; give the world the sway, admit it into the church, and it will efface the church. The world once crucified Christ, and if ever it gets the opportunity it will crucify the church of Christ. It proposes a compromise to the church, true; but its compromise always means death. That is why it proposes it. Men who live in the church of Jesus Christ and men who live in the world live in different spiritual universes, and the difference between the two universes is so great and so radical and so essential that no friendship between them is possible. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

Add to the words of Paul the words of James:

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

"True religion before God is to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

Add to the words of James the words of Peter:

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the

world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; they are again entangled therein, and be overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

But I wish you especially to add to the words of Paul and James and Peter the words of John the Apostle of love. He talks upon this subject just like Jesus:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

"Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world."

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

"As he is, so are we in this world."

This is Christ's teaching over again. It is a declaration, by the last writer of the New Testament, that the type of the Christian has been permanently fixed. Christ himself is the type. Our relation to the world is his. "*As he is, so are we in this world.*" Our mission here as the people of God is *to repeat the life of Jesus Christ.* John says: "Study Jesus Christ if you would know the character you should wear and the life you should live in this world. You

are one with him." "*As he is, even so are we in this world.*" We are called by his name; and we are one with him. We are here with a message; we are here with a mission. Like his, ours is a mediatorial position in the world; and this determines our mode of activity as Christians. It is ours to be in the world, yet not of the world. What did Jesus do when he was in the world? "He kept in unimpeded contact with God, and he kept in unimpeded contact with men." This is what we are to do. We are here to practise the presence of God among men. To represent God. To move among men? Yes; but at the same time to dwell in the secret place of the Most High To converse with men? Yes; but at the same time to keep up a sustained converse with God. In vital touch with God and in vital touch with man—that is the Christian life. But mark you, what this makes out of our companionship with the men of the world! With the men of the world, whose portion is in this life, and in this life only, we have nothing to do *but to save them.* We are to be as Christ unto them. For, "*as he is, so are we in this world.*" When you learn the purpose for which Jesus Christ was in the world, you learn the purpose for which we are in the world.

These are some of the Scriptures to which I referred in the beginning of my sermon and which I said started this question in my soul: "*Am I worldly?*" They are radical; they are searching. They measure me; they weigh me; they analyze me; they summon me to God's judgment-bar. They tell me what I ought to be; and reveal the spirit which should animate me. They give me the life of Jesus Christ by which to square my life, and then they push home this question, "Does your life square with his life?"

My fellow-men, is it right for me to allow myself to be arrested and swayed in my thinking by these Scriptures? Do they impress you as they impress me? Have you noticed, as I have, the tone of severity with which the Bible names and deals with worldliness? When I am at my best, I do not like the world nor worldlings. Do you? When I look at the world from a high spiritual standpoint, there is nothing in its character or destiny to attract me; there is everything to repel me. I do not admire its devotees either in their principles or in their aims. Worldlings are the exponents of the world; but there is not a decent worldling in the Book. Not that the worldlings who walk the Book are few—they are many. In the

Old Testament you have Lot and Achan and Balaam; in the New Testament you have Dives and Judas and Demas and Diotrephos. But they are a bad coterie. What lives they lived! What characters they built up! What influences they exerted! What destinies they reached! Do you wish to duplicate them in your experience? Would you be proud to bear their names? Yet in them we see the very best the world can do for man. All who live worldly will certainly be their duplicates. Think of it—all these men held known and nominal relations to God and to God's Covenant-people. They were all religious worldlings. That only makes it more imperative for us, who are in the church of God, to ask the question: "*Am I worldly?*" The presence of so many worldlings in the Book is indicative of the existence and prevalence of worldliness and is proof of our need of watchfulness on this line of danger.

I think Bunyan, with his insight relative to human nature and relative also to the religious life, discerned this; hence in writing his matchless allegory he strikes at the sin of worldliness as at no other sin, and exposes its prevalence by multiplying in his writings the characters who are swayed by it. He reproduces all the

worldlings of the Bible, in some form or other, and in fresh lights. They are all in his graphic pages. There is Mr. Worldly-wise-man, who lives in the town of Carnal Policy, and Mr. Talkative and Mr. Formalist and Mr. Hypocrisy, and Madame Bubble and By-Ends and Hold-the-world, and Demas, the proprietor of Hill Lucre.

In painting Madam Bubble, Bunyan shows his full skill and his astonishing genius. She is one of his masterpieces. Madam Bubble is simply the vain world personified. She is set forth by mean of a dialogue in which Stand-Fast, Honest, and Great-Heart take part.

Stand-Fast begins by relating a temptation to which he had been subjected. "One in very pleasant attire presented herself unto me and offered me three things. I repulsed her once and twice, but she put by my repulses and smiled. Then I became angry; but she mattered that nothing at all. She made her offers again and said, 'If I would be ruled by her she would make me great and happy'; for said she, 'I am mistress of the world, and men are made happy by me.' Then I asked her name, and she told me it was Madam Bubble. This set me further from her; but she still followed me with her enticements. Then I betook me

to my knees, and cried for help to Him who has said he will always help. This is why you found me praying, gentlemen."

Honest broke in: "Madam Bubble! Is she a tall and comely dame? Doth she not speak smoothly, and give you a smile at the end of each sentence? Doth she not wear a great purse by her side; and is not her hand often in it fingering her money, as if that were her heart's delight?" Stand-Fast replied: "Just so; had she been before you all this while, you could not more amply have set her forth nor have better described her." Then Great-Heart said: "The woman is a witch. Whoever lay their eyes upon her beauty are counted the enemies of God. If one be cunning to get money, she will speak well of him from house to house—she is always at one full table or another. She promises well. She promises everything. She will cast out of her purse gold like dust in some places and to some persons. This is to give her a cheap reputation. She loves to be sought after. It was she that set Absalom against his father and Jeroboam against his master. It was she that persuaded Judas to sell his Lord and that prevailed upon Demas to forsake the godly pilgrim's life. None can tell the mischief that she doth. She

maketh variance betwixt rulers and subjects, betwixt parents and children, betwixt neighbor and neighbor, betwixt a man and himself, betwixt the flesh and the heart." My fellow-men, this woman who stands forth as the personification of the world is a hollow sham. She blows only bubbles of empty hope in the brains of men. She has only the transitory things of the world to offer; and the life which she constructs is nothing more than a far-shining, high-soaring bubble, which breaks and disappoints. Was not Lot's life only a brilliant shining bubble? Did it not break and amount to nothing? Did it not go out of sight in a collapse? Ye who are living for the world and finding your pleasures in it are playing with a bubble.

One of the richest chapters which Bunyan ever wrote, according to my mind, is that chapter in which Christian and Hopeful fell in with a whole bevy of worldlings—all of whom were pilgrims professedly traveling to the Celestial City. First, they overtook a man whose name was By-Ends, who came from the town of Fair-Speech. In the town of Fair-Speech By-Ends said he had many relatives. "Pray, who are your relatives there, if I may make so bold as to question you?" asked Christian. "Almost

the whole town," replied By-Ends; "and in particular my Lord Time-Server and my Lord Fair-Speech; also Mr. Smooth-Man, and Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, and Mr. Anything. The parson of our parish church, Mr. Two-Tongues, is my mother's own brother. . . . The worst that I ever did to give an occasion of offence to any, and for which they gave me the nick-name 'By-Ends,' was that I had always the luck to jump in my judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it was." Continuing, he informed Christian that there were two small points in which he differed from the strict sort of religious people: first, he never did strive against wind and tide; secondly, he was always most zealous when religion went in silver slippers; he loved to walk with religion on the sunny side of the street and when people applauded." But By-Ends soon tired of the company of Christian and Hopeful and fell behind them in the way. He did not, however have to travel alone, for soon there overtook him three other fellow-travelers of a kindred mind, viz.: Mr. Hold-the-World, Mr. Money-Love, and Mr. Save-All. Each of these gentlemen had formerly been school-fellows under Mr. Grip-Man in Love-Gain, a market-town in the county of Coveting. These pil-

grims, spying Christian and Hopeful ahead of them in the road before them, began to talk about them. "They are a couple of far-country-men that after their mode are going on a pilgrimage," said By-Ends. "Alas! why did they not stay that we might have their good company? for they and we and you, sir, I hope, are all going on a pilgrimage," said Mr. Money-Love. "We are indeed," answered By-Ends, "but the men before us are rigid, and love so much their own notions, and do so lightly esteem the opinions of others, that let a man be ever so godly, yet if he jumps not with them in all things, they thrust him quite out of their company." "That is bad," said Save-All, "but we read in the good Book of some that are righteous overmuch." "Why," said By-Ends, "they, after their headstrong fashion, conclude that it is duty to rush on their journey in all weathers; I am for waiting for wind and tide. They are for hazarding all for God at a clap; I am for taking all advantage to secure my life and estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men be against them; I am for religion in so far as the times and my safety will bear. They are for religion in rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in silver slippers, in the sun-

shine, and with applause." To all this Mr. Money-Love and Mr. Save-All and Mr. Hold-the-World most heartily assented, and that for two reasons, *i.e.*, they had both Scripture and reason on their side. As Mr. Hold-the-World remarked, "Abraham and Job were both rich, and had much of this world." All these men traveled along until they came to the Hill Lucre with its gold-mine, where they were enticed from the pilgrim-way by Mr. Demas, the owner of the mine. But after that Bunyan says, "They were never seen in the way again." The deceitfulness of riches and the power of the world wholly destroyed them. They sold themselves, their time, their health, their souls, for wealth. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God; it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

An old English poem sets into the light the destructive power of the world in the lives of men; I can do no better than give it just here:

"Three hungry travelers found a bag of gold;
One ran into the town where bread was sold.

He thought, 'I will poison the bread I buy,
And seize the treasure when my comrades die.'

But they, too, thought, when back his feet have hied,
'We will destroy him, and the gold divide.'

They killed him, and, partaking of the bread,
In a few moments all were dead.

O World! behold what ills thy goods have done;
Thy gold thus poisoned two, and murder'd one."

But we have dwelt long enough with these Scriptures and with their solemn warnings. We have dwelt long enough with these characters of John Bunyan and with their ghastly end: Lot stripped of his all; Achan stoned; Balaam slain; Dives in hell; Judas a suicide; Demas a traitor meeting a traitor's doom; Mme. Bubble collapsed; By-Ends and Money-Love and Save-All and Hold-the-World forever lost and seen no more in the pilgrim-path which leads to the Celestial City. We have dwelt long enough with these; all these have their individual influence with us; they talk to us; they search us; they reveal to us our human nature; they teach us the great prevalence of worldliness even in professed Christians; they plant interrogation points in our hearts and lead us to ask the question, "*Am I worldly?*" They also show how opportune the discussion of worldliness is in the Christian pulpit. It is opportune, for the spirit of the world is even in the church of God itself.

It is in our day as it was in Charles Finney's day. Toward the end of his great career that man of God, Charles Finney, writes: "Oh, if I had strength of body to go through the churches again, instead of preaching to convert sinners, I would preach to bring up the churches to the Gospel-standard of holy living; for the worldliness of the churches and of the professed people of God is the great barrier to the progress of the cross with its salvation. It is a disgrace to religion that it is so."

At first thought one would think that the world would let the church of God alone; it is professedly so different from the world; it is the avowed enemy of the world; but on second thought it appears that the world's best policy is to capture the church and fill it with worldly Christians. Entrenched in the church, the world is in possession of its mightiest power. There is a policy which is far better than blowing up the *Maine*, and that is, capture the *Maine*, and turn its guns on America. That is the policy which the world follows when it captures the church and fills it with nominal Christians who are ruled by fashion and pride and carnal ambition, and who live more for themselves than for God; who make the church a stepping-stone and a gateway into society, a

help in their profession and business, a means of getting on and up in the world, who use the church instead of allowing the church to use them.

But I hear you ask: "How can I tell whether I am worldly or not?" That is the practical question before us, and I am glad you ask it.

I answer, worldliness is a condition of the heart. It is the inner spirit of the man or the woman. First of all, it has to do with your sympathies, your desires, your loves, your state of heart, your mental and moral and spiritual attitude toward the maxims, the aims, the policy, the disposition, the conduct, and the animus of the world. How do you regard the world in your heart? And how do you regard the people of the world?

If in your heart you covet the things of this world, you are worldly. If you are identified with the world more than you are with the church, you are worldly. If you have no time for a prayer each day, no time for a chapter of God's Book, no time for a glimpse of God, not one hour in the week for the prayer-meeting, only an hour and a half for one Sabbath service each week, you are worldly. Some of you have on your visiting-cards: "At home on Monday," or, "At home on Tuesday"; you need another

inscription on your visiting-cards: "At prayer-meeting on Friday, and at church morning and evening on Sabbath." Why not? Are you too worldly to put that inscription on your visiting-cards? Oh, you are trying to be Christians without being odd! Well, you cannot successfully be Christians and not be odd. That inscription on your visiting-cards will be a recognition of the prayer-meeting which the prayer-meeting well merits; and it will be a timely protest against social entertainments and receptions on the Lord's Day which in our time are obtaining even among professed church people.

If your associations in life are worldly, you are worldly. You are surrounded by people who do not fear God, who do not keep his Commandments, who are not living as seeing him who is invisible, who have no treasure in heaven, who have no plans or purposes which extend into an existence beyond the grave; they are vain, they are empty of God, they are minus faith, minus hope, minus all spiritual life. What is your attitude toward such? Do you make your choice of friends, in this life, from these professedly worldly men and women? If so, you are worldly. The child of God says, "I am companion of all those who

fear and obey thee." I tell you, brethren, our worst foes are our ungodly friends. Those who are false to God are not likely to be true to God's people. The smiling daughters of Moab did more to hurt Israel than all the frowning warriors of Balak. All Philistia could not have bound and blinded Samson, if Delilah's charms had not deluded him.

"Then we cannot go into society at all; we must live excluded lives!" I have not said that. No; you can go into society, if you wish; but you must take Christ with you. Do you want to go into society without Christ? If so, what kind of a Christian are you? "*Ye are not of the world. . . . I have chosen you out of the world.*" You can go into society just as Jesus Christ did. Jesus never struck his colors. Neither should you strike yours. So completely was his religious character the whole of him, and so powerful and victorious were his principles, that there was no fear of any company obscuring his testimony for God.

While he mingled with men, they all felt the sacredness which was about him. In his presence they felt the shallowness of the world. You go into society. What is the result? Is society influenced by you, or are you influenced by society? What effect has its enjoyments

upon your religious life and your profession? Does it silence your testimony and cool down your enthusiasm? Does it secularize you and unfit you for prayer? In it are you true to your Saviour? Are you known as a Christian and do people respect your position? Can you speak of the subjects which are nearest your heart? Do you mould society, or does society mould you? By mingling with society are you making others Christian? If yours is a fruitless profession, you are a world. If the worldling can truthfully say of you, "He is no better than I am," you are a worldling. The man who can do business, and not be known as a Christian by his business scruples and method and spirit, is a worldling. A woman who can mingle in society, and not be recognized as a Christian by her modest dress and pure ways and her holy talk, is a worldling.

If you live as a worldling, you are a worldling. That needs no argument; that is axiomatic. That is the whole truth in a nutshell. Christian people, if they are to represent Christ and his church aright in the world, must bring to the world lives that are suffused and all on fire with God's presence. They must be men and women characterized by righteousness and honesty; they must be pure in tone, in speech,

in thought; open and transparent as the light in their ideals and ambitions. They must be men and women of large self-sacrifice.

I have said that the question "Am I worldly?" is an exceedingly practical question; and it is. I wish to say now that there is another question which is just as practical, and that question is this:

What is the best way whereby I can overcome my worldliness?

This sermon would amount to nothing as a force in life, unless I answered this question. To know that I am worldly would only throw me into despair, if the way of escape from my worldliness were not clearly pointed out. I have three points to give you in this line:

1. *If you would overcome your worldliness, live positively—i.e., take as your standard in life Christ and Christ's will, and your high calling in Christ.*

Your calling in Christ is separation from the world. "Ye are not of the world. . . . I have chosen you out of the world." "As he is, so are we in this world." That makes Christ and his life our standard. That makes our high calling in Christ our standard. That calls us to be positive. That leads us to live on the line which the Apostle Paul commands when

he says: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by doing the will of God." We are not to spend our whole time in avoiding this evil and that evil; in fighting down this and that public sentiment; in opposing this and that majority—that is negative. We are to spend our time rather re-living the life of Christ; doing the known and commanded will of God; planting new principles in our souls, and living the new life—this is positive. If we keep our time filled with doing what we ought to do, there will be no place or time for doing the things we ought not to do. The word "*transformed*," translated into holy living, conquers the word "*conformed*." Stand face to face with the shining splendors of the will of God, and become transformed into the incarnation of these, and you will not be conformed to the world. Be spiritual, and you will not be carnal. Be like Christ, and you will not bear in your personality a single feature of Belial. Be honest in business, and you will not be dishonest. Be a Christian in society, and you will not be a heathen. Be a believer, and you will not be an unbeliever. That is, live your whole life on distinctively Christian lines, and your faith will win the victory over the world. The cure for worldliness is this: in all things and

in all places be out-and-out for Christ, and live as an unmistakable citizen of the kingdom of God. Try everything you do by Jesus Christ, and measure it by your high calling. In Christ Jesus you are a new creature; live as a new creature.

2. *If you would overcome your worldliness, analyze narrowly the career of the worldling and make a careful note of his losses in life.*

Use the story of Lot. His is a striking case. He moved out of his simple patriarchal life into Sodom, the world-centre of his age; and you know the result. There was a deterioration of soul; there was a vitiation of character; there was the loss of power; spirituality gave way to carnality. Then came all manner of compromises; then low views of high things, and proposals that no man of God should ever make. But leap over to the end and see what is there. Retribution fell on Lot. And it was swift and terrible and tragic. In no drama ever written by the genius of man is there so overwhelming a climax as the last chapter in Lot's history. His family hopelessly worldly. He himself a jest, mocked by his children; the complete loss of all influence and power among men; his wife overwhelmed with judgment—a poor, broken-down, pitiable old man, without

a single consolation of conscience or a single atom of affection, empty-handed he is compelled to flee for his life. It is true that he was accompanied by his two unmarried daughters; but they carried in them all the carnality of Sodom and became the mothers of children who were the avowed enemies of God and of God's people. Contrast Lot, whose only abiding gift to the world consists in the Ammorites and the Moabites—contrast Lot with Abraham, the friend of God, from whom he parted, who gave mankind Israel with their covenants and oracles and promises and prophets and the great Christ. Lot stands for worldliness; Abraham for unworldliness. Give me unworldliness. Was not Lot saved? Yes; but his life was lost. He went empty-handed into heaven. That is the way it is with worldlings the world over; they may themselves be saved, but their life of fifty and sixty and seventy precious years—this is lost. Can any Christian afford to lose his life? If not, then no Christian can afford to be worldly.

3. *If you would overcome your worldliness look after your environment, and live in spiritual associations.*

The unworldly company of the Book is a glorious company. Live in that. It is hard to

surpass the personalities who live in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. The goodly fellowship of the Apostles and Prophets, this has no superior. Protect God's Sabbath with its uplifting fellowships. You need its communion to re-spiritualize and re-charge your depressed Christian life. It should be a day of strengthening insight and vision and communion. Make some man of God your special comrade and confidant in holy things. Lot failed just here. He left Abraham the friend of God, and when he lost his fellowship he lost his religion. Do not attempt to live without your Abraham, your trusted friend, who is also God's trusted friend, and who has power with God, and to whom God is continually committing his great and wondrous secrets; who can instruct you and comfort you and pray for you. For the purpose of real, intimate, spiritual companionship, the having such a friend with whom you can freely and unreservedly talk is the very next thing to having God with whom you can talk, and in whom you can confide, and with whom you can consult. It is a great thing to know a man of God; to get into the secrets of his heart; to enjoy the benediction of his presence. God is in that man, and through that man is protecting us, and is in-

structing us, and is enfolding us with a divine and life-giving atmosphere. "He that walketh with the wise shall be wise"; even so he that walketh with the unworldly shall be unworldly.

"Run, speak to this young man."—ZECHARIAH ii. 4.

OUR DUTY TO OUR YOUNG MEN.

V.

OUR DUTY TO OUR YOUNG MEN.

Let us get the Scripture location of this text. Let us reach its first meaning. By doing this we shall be able to find our way to the proper use of it in the times in which we now live. It carries in it an inner principle; by locating it we shall be able to reach that inner principle and make it a practical force. Its inner principle is this: "The young man carries in him the future; if we are to take care of the future we must take care of the young man."

The text is part of the book of Zechariah. Zechariah, the writer of the book, was a colleague of Haggai, and was contemporary with Zerubbabel the prince, and with Joshua the high priest, during the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. He and Haggai were prophets of God during the restoration of Israel from the Babylonian captivity to the Holy Land, the old home of the fathers. Israel had

a great work to do in reclaiming Palestine, and Zechariah was their God-sent inspiration in pushing that work to a successful and glorious issue. He saw a grand future for Israel, and this he lifted up before the people as a cheer and a stimulus and a source of strength. A shining future, beckoning one on, always puts nerve and power into a workman.

God gave his prophet a revelation of the grandeur of the future in the form of striking visions, and his book consists of these visions put into type. These visions were a series of pictures proclaiming the advent of one glory after another. When God wants to think grandly he thinks in pictures. The text is part of a vision which sets before the mind a picture of the rebuilt Jerusalem, "The City of Peace." God meant the restored Jerusalem to be the joy of the whole earth. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!"

In the vision of Zechariah the prophet sees a young man all on fire with zeal for the future of Jerusalem going forth to the old site of the city, now in ruins; and, as he watches, the young man begins to take the measure of the foundations of the city as a preparation for rebuilding. The great mass of the returned exiles were young men, and this young man

was one of their leaders. Two angels are in company with the prophet watching the young man, and as they watch him they discover that he is taking the old measurements and is planning to build Jerusalem on the old model, and according to the old size. This was not according to God's mind. God had a new model for the coming Jerusalem; he had much larger plans. He meant the coming Jerusalem to be a much greater city than the old Jerusalem had been, and he meant that he himself should be its defence, "a wall of fire about it." God had for Jerusalem grander things than the young man ever dreamed of. Seeing the young man's misconception and want of knowledge and low ideals and absentee hopes, the first and leading angel cries unto the second and subordinate angel:

"Run, speak to this young man! Show him the boundaries of the new city of God, how far they are to exceed the old limits. Broaden the young man; broaden his conceptions and his ideas. Put an excelsior into his heart. See that he does God's work in God's way and up to the measure of God's grand purpose. Correct him; inspire him; strengthen him; protect him; protect him against low and small and antiquated ideals. Make a noble workman

out of him. That young man carries the future in him; run to him and enter into sympathy with him, and appreciate him and make him right, and take care of him; by so doing you will make right and take care of the future. Do this, and do it at once. '*Run*'; make haste; the interests of Jerusalem are at stake. '*Run*'; make haste; the interests of the nation are at stake. '*Run.*'"

My fellow-men, the text makes plain the fact that there is a duty which we owe our young men; and it makes plain also what that duty is. It is our duty "to go for them." "Run, speak to this young man."

In unfolding before us our duty to our young men our text makes our duty to consist in three things:

1. It is our duty to appreciate our young men, and recognize what they carry in them.

2. It is our duty to safeguard our young men and instruct them.

3. It is our duty to welcome our young men as part of the great church of God, and commit the future to them.

These three things the angel of God did in dealing with the young man of our text, and these three things we have learned by locating the text, and by getting at its inner principle.

Our subject is now fairly before us, that we may search ourselves by means of it, and may seek stimulus, and may get into closer touch with our young men, and may make holy resolutions in the line of our duty toward them. Brethren, there is no theme more important that this very theme.

1. *It is our duty to appreciate our young men and recognize what they carry in them.*

They carry the future in them. I hear you say: "That is a truism, everybody admits that. It is not worth while making a point out of it." Still I make a point out of it, and I dwell upon it. For, truism as it is, the majority of us do not realize it. If we realized it as we should, we would treat our young men differently. We would put the stress of our labor upon their interests. We accept this point in a general way: "Oh, yes, certainly; our youth carry the future in them." But we do not particularize this point; we do not individualize our boys, and see in this boy a future and a coming leadership on this line, and see in that boy an altogether different future and a leadership on an altogether different line. We do not treat each and every young man as important. Truism as our point is, we have not gotten a right hold of it yet. Our underestimation and our neg-

lect say that we do not rightly appreciate our young men. Let me illustrate.

In Scotland they held a communion some years ago in one of their Highland churches. At this communion there was only one member received into the fellowship of the church. They held their communions in those days but once every six months. Six months, and only one convert! There was no thanksgiving to God for that increase. There was grumbling everywhere instead. The talk on every lip was: "At the last communion there were twenty received into the fellowship of the church; at this communion we have received only one, and he is nothing but a growing lad." If the people had foreseen the future of that lad, there would have been no complaint; they would have sung one of their loudest songs of thanksgiving to God. That lad was the coming David Livingstone. He was worth that whole church lumped together; he was worth twenty such churches. That was the largest accession to its membership that church ever had. The future of the Kingdom of God in Africa was in that lad; but nobody saw it that day. David Livingstone was not appreciated on the day he made his public confession of Christ. We say that we believe that our

young men carry in them the future, but our actions and our treatment and our underestimation of our young men say that we do not believe it.

We see very little ways ahead in weighing and judging our young men. In judging and in weighing them we are partial. We give the preference to those born in the home of wealth, and slight the poor-born. We look at the face and form and not at the heart. Even the prophet Samuel did this, and, doing this, chose Eliab in preference to David.

We are very slow in seeing a future for the hayseeds who come to our community; yet the hayseeds have made New York the greatest city in the United States. Most of the men in New York to-day who are prominent and successful in the various walks of life are not New York born, but are importations from the country. They were at one time hayseeds. When they started out in life, probably nobody believed in them, and nobody saw a future for them except their fond mothers and their own selves.

A man, writing to his country home from the city of New York twelve years ago, wrote this paragraph for the encouragement of country boys:

"Every day in this city at one o'clock three hundred million dollars sit around a little mahogany table in an upper room in the Western Union building, and eat a plain but substantial lunch. The millions belong to Jay Gould, Sidney Dillon, Russell Sage, and ex-Gov. Alonzo B. Cornell. All were country boys, and wore shoes only on Sunday. Mr. Gould and Mr. Sage got their ideas of finances in village stores, and Mr. Dillon and Governor Cornell were day laborers, and were thankful when they trudged home Saturday night with six dollars in their pockets."

Three hundred million dollars! That was the future which these young men carried in them, yet nobody surmised it when they were young men. But the fact that nobody surmised it did not alter the case; the future was there.

Who, think ye, saw the Apocalyptist in the country lad of Judea, familiarly called John? Or who ever dreamed that he would write that wonderful roll of the Gospel, or those Epistles of love, or that marvellous Apocalypse? But these things were all there, awaiting only the coming of Jesus Christ into John's heart and life.

Who, think ye, saw the great apostle of Jesus Christ in the lad who played in the streets of Tarsus; or the great man of the future who was to fill "The Book of the Acts," and who

was to pen the ever-living Epistles? Yet that boy's hand was the hand destined by God to hold the inspired pen, and that boy's brain was the brain that was destined to think the grand thoughts that gave Christianity a second and larger life; and that boy's personality was the personality which was to contain the Son of God, and be his temple, and the medium through which Jesus Christ would live over again his holy life among men and give it a second incarnation.

Illustrations on this line crowd the mind beyond number—viz., illustrations of great futures growing out of obscure boys. Christopher Columbus was the son of a weaver, and himself a weaver. Claude Lorraine was bred a pastry cook. Cervantes was a common soldier. Homer was the son of a farmer. Demosthenes was the son of a cutler. Oliver Cromwell was the son of a brewer. Howard was apprenticed to a grocer. Franklin was a journeyman printer. Daniel Defoe was the son of a butcher. Virgil was the son of a porter. Horace was the son of a shopkeeper. Shakespeare was the son of a wool-stapler. Robert Burns was the son of a plowman of Ayrshire.

In the young men about us, greatness is

slumbering unrecognized; for history shows that young men in all the walks of life—even in the humblest walks—carry in them magnificent futures. You cannot discriminate and pick out the geniuses, and care for them and train them; therefore *you must care for all and train all and value all young men.*

There is a fact which I should like to bring forward and emphasize at this stage of our thought; it is intimately connected with the point before us, although it has an application to young men themselves and to their course and conduct. In this sermon, I am not so much speaking *to* young men as I am speaking *for* and *on behalf of* young men. The fact I wish to present now is for young men themselves directly, and only indirectly for their friends and helpers. It is this:

Young men, while you carry in you the future, and while you are getting ready for the future, you must not throw your lives so far forward as to forget the present. Your future is not so far away. Your future will soon be present.

I am afraid that when we lay our stress upon the responsibility of young people for the future, there is a danger lest, in thinking too intensely about *the future*, they forget alto-

gether about *the present*. I want to say to our young people: While you are getting ready for living, remember this—*you are living now.* You are living now as much as you will ever live. You are responsible now—as much responsible now as you will ever be. I want to say also that probably the very best work which you will ever do in life will be done while you are young. So I advise you to get into your future at once. Goethe says:

"We must be young to do great things."

Schiller says:

"Keep true to the dreams of thy youth."

Both these poets teach that it is the thoughts, ambitions, darings, and enterprises of youth that stand for strength and achievement in the world. And this is true. As a rule, it is young men who achieve. It is young men who fight the battles of the nation. The average age of the men in the Union army during the Civil War was twenty-five. Gladstone, and Holmes, and Whittier, and Longfellow are exceptions to the rule of achievements; they were great in old age and active in old age because they retained in a large measure the spirit of their youth. Even in their case, comparing them with themselves, their best work

was not their old-age work; their superior work was their more youthful work.

Young men, do not let there be too much future in your life. Put plenty of the present into it. This story is told by the press: Some speculators sold lots to a Chinaman over in the New Jersey swamps. The Chinaman thought he had made a bargain; but when he went over to see his purchase and found that it was all covered with water, he was grievously disappointed and expressed himself quite strongly. The real-estate agent, trying to comfort and pacify him, said to him: "These lots, sir, have a great future; and that is where the bargain comes in." The Chinaman shook his head and replied: "Too much future." Young men, see to it that there be not too much future in your lives. Carry in you the present as well as the future. You are living now; you are responsible now; realize this, and, realizing this, live your very best now and meet your present responsibility up to its full measure.

If you are to live well in this world and accomplish anything great, you must live well while in youth. The men who have made their mark in the world have for the most part made it while young. Jesus Christ was a young man. He died at thirty-three. At thirty-

three he had redeemed the world. At thirty Alexander had conquered the world. At thirty Napoleon was emperor of Italy. At twenty-nine Patrick Henry made his great patriotic speech, which inaugurated the American Revolution. At thirty-three Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. At thirty-five Martin Luther had successfully inaugurated the Reformation. At twenty-six Whitefield filled both hemispheres with the fame of his sacred eloquence.

The moral of all this is: There is no time to be lost, either upon the part of our young men —they must begin to live at once; or upon the part of those who would help in preparing young men to get ready for life—they must give the help they intend to give at once. The word "*run*" in the text must be italicized and magnified: "*run*, speak to this young man."

2. *It is our duty to safeguard our young men and instruct them.*

To this duty the Christian community should at once awake. Our youth should be safeguarded by means of instruction. Methods should be adopted whereby the large and varied experiences of those who have succeeded in life may be placed at the disposal of those who are just starting in life. One large church

in New York seems to have awakened to a sense of its duty on this line. I use it as an illustration. Last season it arranged a course of Sabbath-evening lectures, in which prominent men in the different professions and trades of America gave their experience and their matured counsel to young men. Physicians spoke there, and eminent lawyers and judges, and successful railroad men, and world-known literary men, and millionaire financiers. Take, for example, Andrew Carnegie, the self-made capitalist; he spoke, and his millions back of him emphasized every word he uttered and carried his message home to thousands of young men through all the land, for his words were taken down and printed. What did he say? In brief, he gave these seven counsels, and I give them here as an object-lesson to show how those of you who are older can safeguard those who are younger.

"1. Never enter a barroom, nor let the contents of a barroom enter you.

"2. Do not use tobacco.

"3. Concentrate. Having entered upon a certain line of work continue and combine on that line.

"4. Do not shirk; rather go beyond your task. Do not let any young man think he has performed his full duty when he has performed the work assigned him. A man will never rise if he acts thus. Promotion comes

from exceptional work. A man must discover where his employer's interests lie and push for these. The young man who does this is the young man whom Capital wants for a partner and son-in-law. He is the young man who by and by reaches the head of the firm.

"5. Save a little always. Whatever your wages lay by something from them.

"6. Never speculate. Never buy stocks or grain on margin.

"7. Never indorse. When you enter on business for yourself never indorse for others. It is dishonest. All your resources, and all your credit, are the sacred property of the men who have trusted you. If you wish to help another, give him all the cash you can spare; never indorse. It is dishonest."

It is a grand thing for our youth that our leading men are willing to step from behind their millions and look large audiences of young men in the face, and talk thus. This is throwing safeguards around our young men and instructing them.

The chief part of safeguarding and instructing our young men, however, I believe is laid upon the home. And I wish to make this statement as prominent as possible. This is where I feel impelled by the Spirit to lay my stress. The family is the oldest institution pertaining to mankind. God gives the boys and girls first of all to the home to train them

and place them in the state, to train them and place them in business, to train them and place them in the church. He puts them in the home to be guarded against temptation, to be counselled and instructed, and to have Jesus Christ built into them. Parents, yours is the first responsibility, and yours is the last responsibility, and yours is the eternal responsibility; and of this perpetual responsibility there is not a solitary creature or agency on earth that can relieve you or answer to God for you. God held that good man Eli responsible for his two sons, Hophni and Phineas. Why? Because he was their father. And God visited the father with judgment on account of the sins of those two sons. God always does that.

The boys are not found in the church: who is held responsible? The parents. The boys desecrate the Sabbath by spending God's day in riding the bicycle: who is held responsible? The parents. This is the rule, until the sons are in homes of their own; and even then a large degree of responsibility rests upon parents for the conduct of their sons. What is the home good for if not to safeguard and protect the children. Agonize until your children are brought into the church; agonize until your children are kept from Sabbath dese-

cration. Let there be an uprising of the home against Sunday bicycling. When God gave you your children, you had wellnigh absolute omnipotence over them. You had the power to put into them just what you wished. If you have lost your influence over them for good, you have sinned it away; and for that you are responsible. Your duty now is to agonize until you get that influence back. I stand here to assert and re-assert this solemn truth, *that God holds the home responsible for its sons.* And in God's name, I look the fathers and mothers of this church in the face, and ask, *Where are your boys?* They should be with you here by your side, to be safeguarded and instructed.

What is the first and chief duty which we owe our young men? The first and chief duty which we owe our young men is to get back a keen and burning sense of our parental responsibility for our sons. Parents, from this position which I solemnly take here this day, I refuse to budge a single inch. God holds you responsible for these boys of yours who have grown up into young manhood; he holds you responsible for their absence from the church; he holds you responsible for the characters which they ought to have; he holds you responsible for the grand work which they ought

to be doing for Jesus Christ and his kingdom. God is here to-day, in the midst of the holiness of his house, and he is pushing this question upon every parental heart: "*Your boys: Where are they?*" "*Your boys: Where are they?*" "*Are they safeguarded and instructed?*" "*If not, why not?*"

3. *It is our duty to welcome our young men as part of the great church of God, and commit the future to them.*

I have spoken of the duty and responsibility of the family. I must now speak of the duty and responsibility of the church, for this present point which is before us treats of our duty individually as part of the church. The church has a great work to do here; for the number of our young men is great. Statisticians tell us that there are in the American republic no less than fifteen million of men between the ages of eighteen and forty-four. If the Christian churches were reaching these men with any degree of success, what mighty powers for God our churches would be! What an attendance of men we would have at our services! Is it not worth while for the churches to put forth their full strength that they may reach these? If these men will not of their own accord come to our churches, then it is the duty

of our churches to go after them. Churches of God, reach these fifteen millions, and you will take this great republic for Jesus Christ and will make our civil future safe for centuries. It was between these ages, eighteen and forty-four, that Christ and the school of his apostles, a band of young men, established Christianity and gave Christendom to the world. We want these very men who are between these ages, eighteen and forty-four; we want them for work and for enterprise. They are men at their very best.

The question suggests itself just here: How largely are the young men being reached by the churches and by the agencies of the churches? I answer: The results are equal to the efforts expended. No seed-sowing yields a grander harvest. Young men are reachable. They are largely susceptible to the influence of Jesus Christ. They respond as heartily as any other class of mankind. Take the statistics of the great religious movements of our day as the evidence—I mean the movements in which the church is seen at its best! There, for example, is the Christian Endeavor movement, with its 40,000 societies and its 2,000,000 members. A fair proportion of these 2,000,000 are young men. Take the Young Men's

Christian Association, which celebrated its jubilee in London four years ago. It shows a brotherhood of 500 associations, with a total membership of over half a million young men. Take the Students' Volunteer Movement, working on missionary lines. It has a roll of 4,000, three-fourths of them young men, and all offering themselves for mission work for all the fields of the world. There has been nothing like that since the day of Pentecost.

Among the later movements of the day, we must not forget the Young Men's Christian Association work among the colleges and universities. Work done here has been most fruitful. In less than twenty years, in the institutions of North America, 500 associations have been established, with a membership of 30,000 students. Over sixty thousand young men have been educated in methods of Christian work by these associations, and these young men are our coming lawyers, physicians, teachers, and business men. This is the development of the *laic* element of the church. This is great. This is great, when we compare the present with the past. Go no farther back than the days of Dr. Dwight. When Dr. Dwight entered the presidency of Yale University, he found a large number of young men

there who were open and avowed atheists. They actually assumed the names of the noted atheists of the times. One called himself Voltaire, another Paine, a third Hume, and a fourth Bolingbroke. To-day Yale is a distinctively Christian university, with the majority of the students fearless Christians. As it is in Yale, so it is in our other colleges. At Cornell, Princeton, and Colby universities, 50 per cent of the students are church-members; at Williams, 60 per cent; at Brown, 65 per cent; at Amherst, 75 per cent; at Boston University, 85 per cent.

Dr. Watson ("Ian Maclaren"), in his biography of Henry Drummond, who worked for Christ in colleges, says: "When Drummond began his work in Edinburgh University, there was no religion outside of a dozen men. Twenty years afterward six hundred young men met every Sunday evening for worship. There was a new breath in academic life; men were now reverent, earnest, clean-living, and clean-thinking, and the reformer who wrought this change was Henry Drummond."

The results of the work done for young men in our colleges affords the greatest satisfaction. It has brought into the church of Christ the brain-power of the future and the future lead-

ers of thought. It has consecrated scholarship to the Kingdom of God. The net results here are great for one reason, and that is, the young men are here together and can be reached. It is easy to go to them.

The question with us now is, Are the young men out of our colleges reached by the church as effectively as the young men in our colleges? That is the practical question. We must answer honestly: No, they are not. Here we are face to face with the individual church. The individual church is not reaching our young men. What young men? The young men who come among us from the country, and from rural villages, and from other cities. I am not now speaking of the young men born in our homes in the city. I have already put the responsibility for them where it rightly belongs, and I am not going to change my verdict: the responsibility for them belongs with the parents. I am speaking now of the young men in our midst who are away from their home. There are probably fifty thousand such in the borough of Brooklyn alone. They are young men who are strangers.

Of all young men, these are the young men who need our care. These are the young men whom the churches should seek out and be to

them both father and mother. The more generous, and noble, and large-hearted they are, the severer their temptations and the more in number their tempters. The mean, miserly, small-souled, despicable young man is comparatively safe. Tempters are choice in their tastes; they pick the best as their victims.

Now, I believe that God cannot and will not forgive the churches of our city if they are indifferent and cold and neglectful in their duty just here—*i.e.*, if they let these young men go to destruction without doing all in their power for their rescue. Churches of God, if you can save these young men and refuse to do it, how can you look God in the face or how can you ask the blessing of God? What reason is there that God should bless you? God ought to blot you out of existence and plant other and faithful churches in your places; and he will.

Brethren, have you considered your duty on this line? Do you think of these young men? Have you done anything yourself personally for them? You are part of the church. Think of it for a moment!

A young man leaves home for the first time; he reaches our great city an absolute stranger. He was never so lonely. He is homesick. He goes to his work, glad that he has work to

make him forget himself and his loneliness. Oh, how long the nights are! That little upper hall-bedroom is not home. He is glad when Sabbath comes and he can go to church. There meet the friends of God; there is the household of faith; and he has been taught that he is a friend of God and a member of the household of faith. He will see whole families there, and they will remind him of his father's family. Perhaps some one will speak a kind word to him. He expects this. He expects a welcome. I think that it is often here at church that the young man, a stranger in the city, gets his first through and through chill, which freezes the love out of his heart, and puts even God at a great distance from him—puts God almost, if not altogether, out of his life—certainly puts the church of God out of his life. He comes into the great congregation, and not a soul recognizes him, and not a hand is put into his in welcome. It is a queer family of God, such a church. It is a refrigerator household of faith.

But this does not occur often. *It does occur often.* I have been told of such young men, strangers in the city, who have come into this church one Sabbath, two Sabbaths, three Sabbaths, four Sabbaths, five Sabbaths, six Sab-

baths, seven Sabbaths; and there was not a single hand-shake, not a single word of welcome, and not a single invitation, "*Come again.*" It is a shame. A queer family of God! Who is to blame? We are all of us to blame. Let us resolve that such a thing shall never again be possible in our household of faith. "*Run, speak to this young man.*" Let the old acquaintances in the pews wait for their salutations until you, in God's name, have bade him welcome. As a church, are we doing anything for these young men who have come into our city? What are we doing? In the church to which I ministered in Boston, we had a bureau of information and reception to deal with just such. It was organized at my suggestion. We advertised our existence and purpose in *The Congregationalist*, and paid for the advertisement. That advertisement went into hundreds of New England homes, in country and villages, and parents wrote us on behalf of their sons in the city and their sons about to come to the city, and felt glad that there were Christians to look after them. We helped these sons to get homes in Christian boarding-houses, and we located them in the church. It was a benediction to read the letters of thanks which we received from Christian homes and

hearts. As a church, are we doing anything like that?

One man in that church, a rich man, who came when young as a stranger to Boston, made this rule: Every Sabbath he had three extra plates put upon his dinner-table. These three plates were for young men without homes, strangers in the city. He entertained one hundred and fifty strangers every year, and gave one hundred and fifty young men the privilege of seeing how a home looked from the inside. He was a busy man, but he taught a Bible-class which numbered from one hundred to one hundred and fifty young men. That man did more for that church than any minister ever did. The young men loved him, and loved God through him, and loved the church of God through him. It was an impressive scene the day we laid that good man away in the churchyard at Andover. A trainload of young men attended his funeral, and young men carried his silent form upon their strong shoulders to its last resting-place. Have we anything like that in this church? Certainly we have men among us, in these pews, who could do this kind of work, and do it effectively if they but once whole-heartedly consecrated themselves to it. They could thus serve the

church, and the young men, and their own selves, and their God. A Sabbath-school class of one hundred or one hundred and fifty young men, strangers in the city! God is calling for that this day. Who will hear the call of God? Who will inaugurate this class? Who will build it up? Who will pray for it? Who will teach it and lead it? Christian homes opened to Christian hospitality! That is what God wants for these strangers. Who will respond to that call? God forgive us that we have not done more of just such work for our young men!

Brethren, as Christian parents, do for these young men, away from home, what you would that others should do for your sons, if they were compelled to leave you and go to a strange city to push their callings in life. As part of the church of God, I call upon you to welcome them and make them feel at home with us in this church which God has so honored in the past.

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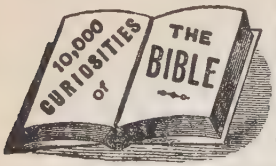

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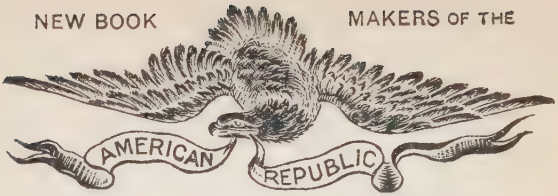

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